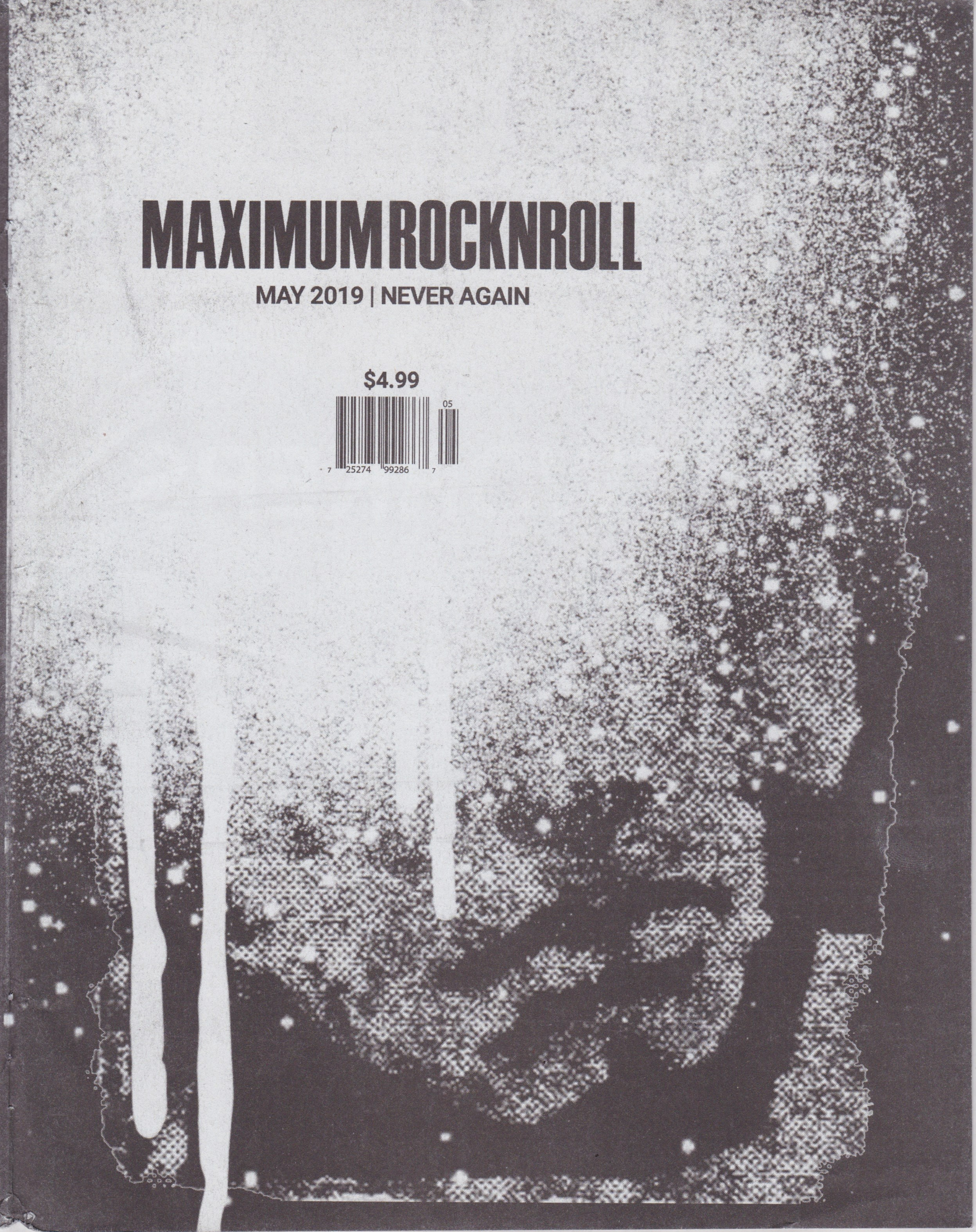
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

MAY 2019 | NEVER AGAIN

$4.99



Maximum Rocknroll was a monthly magazine, published since 1982. We will carry on bringing you the best in worldwide punk at **maximumrocknroll.com**. All work is donated and no one receives any salary. Anyone is welcome to reprint anything from ***MRR***, but only if it is not-for-profit.

Please continue to send records, demos, zines, and letters to:

Maximum Rocknroll
PO Box 3852
Oakland, CA 94609

Send interviews, articles, scene reports, and photos to:

mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

Our website:
maximumrocknroll.com

SHITWORKERS

Grace Ambrose
Lydia Athanasopoulou
Pete Avery
Matt Badenhop
Mike Battleaxe
Bryony Beynon
Biff Bifaro
Imogen Binnie
Heather Blotto
Graham Booth
Tamara Bricker
Justin Briggs
Mitch Cardwell
Jon Carnes
Otto Christenson
Robert Collins
Rob Coons
Talya Cooper
David Corkle
Paul Curran
Arwen Curry
Michael De Toffoli
Joan DeToro
Mark Dober
John Downing
Erika Elizabeth
Caleb Fisher
Miranda Fisher
Oliver Fisher
Jonathan Floyd
Joey Baby Frankl
Layla Gibbon
Dan Goetz
Dan Gudgel
Felix Havoc
Greg Harvester
Hèctor
Mette Helms
Rick Henry
Ryan Hertel
Michelle Hill
Lefty Hooligan
Brandi Howell
Chris Hubbard
Jesska Hughes
Ramsey Kanaan
Kenny Kaos
Carolyn Keddy
Ray Lujan
SM
Megan March
Allan McNaughton
Pirouz Mehmandoost
Meghan Monahan
Gina Murrell
Golnar Nikpour
Mimi Thi Nguyen
John No
Erich Olsen
Nirzar Pangarkar
Langford Poh
Lindsey Q
Al Quint
Nimmy Ramona
Camylle Reynolds
Matt Reynolds
Nicky Reynolds
Sam Robinson
Jason Ryan
Ken Sanderson
Fred Schrunk
CC Servon
Jelena Skracic
Martin Sorrondeguy
Martin Sprouse
Ali Tadayon
Alex Turner
Booz Ullrey
Andrew Underwood
Viktor Vargyai
Nicole Verto
Shivaun Watchorn
Thera Webb
Erin Yanke
Tim Yohannan
Scott Zuppardo

We will be looking for shitworkers to be a part of the future of MRR as reviewers, writers, editors, radio DJs, archivists, and more. If you want to be involved with this project, get in touch at mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

TOP TENS • MRR #432

Some of our contributors' top ten things we've reviewed this month. *Top tens and record reviews will continue at maximumrocknroll.com!* For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels. Long live DIY.

GRACE AMBROSE

- MERCENÁRIAS – Baú 83-87 LP
- DIOR – live
- LITHICS – live
- NOXEEMA – live
- GAZ – CS
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- CLARKO – I Just Wanna Pay/ Mediocre Man 45
- IRON LUNG – live
- FREAK – Ritual Death EP
- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- SLANT – Vain Attempt EP

PETER AVERY

- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- ZERO GAIN – Modern Blues. The First Five Years. CD
- REDNESS – Killer Bees 12"
- FRIED EGG – Square One LP
- HOMELESS CADAVER – 45
- TICS – Agnostic Funk 12"
- NEW AGE GROUP – All Grown Up EP
- COWBOYS – The Bottom of a Rotten Flower LP
- ARTERIES – LP
- BAD SLEEP – LP

MATT BADENHOP

- SYNDROME 81 – live
- FUGA – live
- BONESTRIPPER – live
- GAZ – CS
- GUN – live
- FUERZA BRUTA – Somos el Mal EP
- MERCENÁRIAS – Baú 83-87 LP
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- DIFFICULT – CS
- PERRA VIDA – Célebres Plumíferos EP

HEATHER BLOTTO

- ARTERIES – LP
- PANDEMIX – LP + live
- SALIVA TRIBE – live
- BAD SLEEP – LP
- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- GATTOPARDO – Cleo EP
- NEW AGE GROUP – All Grown Up EP
- QUARANTINE – 2xLP
- TAZER – Human A+" EP
- TICS – Agnostic Funk LP

MITCH CARDWELL

- NEON – live
- SICK THOUGHTS – live
- FREAK – Ritual Death EP
- KRISTEN RESNING – EP
- LOW LIFE – LP
- COLLATE – Communication/Selective Memory 45
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- THE WORLD – live
- BAUS – live

ROBERT COLLINS

- VIDRO – Allt Brinner 12"
- HITTER – demo
- CANKRO – Reflexo da Verdade EP
- GENITAL JUGGLING/JODIE FASTER – split LP
- THE UNCOMMITTED – demo
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- PERRA VIDA – Célebres Plumíferos EP
- THE SHRIKE – demo
- ZONA ZŁA – demo
- GATTOPARDO – Cleo EP
- SLANT – Vain Attempt EP
- SOLOIST ANTI POP TOTALIZATION – LP

JOAN DETORO

- MEMBRANE – live
- SHIT COFFINS – live
- KHIIS – live
- GLOWING BRAIN – CS + live
- THE DARK – live
- SALIVA TRIBE – live
- HEZ – Problemas EP
- SLANT – Vain Attempt EP
- GAZ – CS
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- FRIED EGG – Square One LP

LAYLA GIBBON

- LITHICS / RAYS – live
- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- LOW LIFE – Downer EDN LP
- GAZ – CS
- MERCENÁRIAS – Baú 83-87 LP
- SOLOIST ANTI POP TOTALIZATION – LP
- FREAK – Ritual Death EP
- DIÄT – Positive Disintegration LP
- COLLATE – Communication/Selective Memory 45
- COWBOYS – The Bottom of a Rotten Flower LP

GREG HARVESTER

- THE BODY – CS + live
- CLARKO – I Just Wanna Pay/ Mediocre Man 45
- ARTERIES – LP
- PANDEMIX – In Condemnation LP
- BODY BREAK – CS
- THE FLOOR ABOVE – Assault on Still Life CS
- BAD SLEEP – LP
- WOMBO – Staring at Trees CS
- SLANT – Vain Attempt EP
- IRON LUNG / RED BERRIES – live

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE CAVEMEN – Lowlife EP
- SLANT – Vain Attempt EP
- TAZER – Human A+ EP
- COLLATE – Communication 45
- LOW LIFE – Downer EDN LP
- FRIED EGG – Square One LP
- BLOODSHOT BILL – Come Get Your Love Right Now LP
- CATCH AS CATCH CAN – Garst 45
- THE EMBARRASSMENT – 12"
- AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS / MARK SULTAN / PETER MURPHY – live
- Writing for MRR

RAY LUJAN

- ARTERIES – LP
- BAD WIG/SIN BAD – split LP
- BLACK CAMARO – LP
- COWBOYS – Rotten Flower LP
- KICKER – Pure Drivel LP
- MENTAL FIX – Bricolage CD
- NEW AGE GROUP – All Grown Up EP
- OLD FIRM CASUALS – LP
- THIS MEANS WAR – Heart Strings LP
- ZERO GAIN – Modern Blues CD
- THE STITCHES – live
- AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS – live

INTERNATIONAL DISTROS

Below is a list of some of the many non-US distributors that currently carry *MRR*. We do our best to cover as much territory outside of the US that we can, but we still want to distribute to more parts of the world.

MRR has access to some of the lowest international postal rates offered by the USPS. If you have a distro, want to sell *MRR* at shows, or just want to get cheaper copies for friends by buying wholesale, email distro@maximumrocknroll.com for more details.

European distributors should get in touch with Specialist Subject for wholesale in Europe: specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk.

BELGIUM
Wangedrag
Wangedrag.be
facebook.com/wangedrag

CZECH REPUBLIC
Phobia
mirek@phobiarecords.net
phobiarecords.net

FINLAND
Teen Wolf
Fleminginkatu 11
00530 Helsinki
teenwolfrecords.com

FRANCE
Crapoulet Records
@ Lollipop Records Store
Firminhac
Rue Jean de Berhardy 39A
Marseille 13001
cool@crapoulet.fr
crapoulet.fr

GERMANY
Kink Records
ralf@kink-records.de
kink-records.de

Static Shock Musik
Burknerstr. 6
Berlin 12047
staticshock@web.de
staticshockmusik.com

HUNGARY
Mountza Fanzine
Félsziget Klubház
Subscriptions available
revolution.bummer@
gmail.com

ITALY
Agipunk
Via Rainaldi 5
40139 Bologna
koppadsr@yahoo.it
agipunk.com

Coward Records
cowardrecords@gmail.com
cowardrecords.com

Radiation Records
Via Del Boschetto 94
00184 Roma
and
Via Romanello Da Forli', 14
00176 Roma
marco@radiationrecords.net
radiationrecords.net

NETHERLANDS
Don't Buy Records
Subscriptions available
dontbuyrecords@gmail.com
dontbuyrecords.blogspot.com

NORWAY
40RPM Infoshop/Byllepest
Hausmannsgate 40
0182 Oslo
byllepestdistro@gmail.com

PORTUGAL
Black Mamba
Burgers and Records
info@blackmamba.pt
Rua Martires da Liberdade, 130
4050-359 Porto

SERBIA
Underground Disco Beocin

SPAIN
Cintes Podrides
c/o Hector Garcia Lorente
PO Box 24042
Barcelona 8080
cintespodrides@gmail.com

Angel Fresnillo
Avenida de Ulia 5 6°1ZQ
20110 Trintxerpe Gipuzcoa
ajaulop@gmail.com

La Negra
Calle de Eugenio Salazar, 9
Madrid 28002
lanegrashop.es

SWEDEN
Push My Buttons
savage@ebox.trinet.se

Flyktsoda Fanzine
Gamla Tuvevägen 11A
41724 Göteborg

SWITZERLAND
Rinderherz Records
Postfach 1033
CH-2501 Biel/Bienne
rinderherz@gmx.net
rinderherzrecords.ch.vu

UNITED KINGDOM
Specialist Subject
Wholesale & single issues
First Floor EXCHANGE
72 - 73 Old Market
Bristol, BS2 0EJ
info@specialistsubject
records.co.uk

Different Kitchen
differentkitchen.bigcartel.com

Malicious Telecommunications
Subscriptions available
3A Daneville Rd
Camberwell
London SE5 8SE
malicioustele.com

ARGENTINA
X El Cambio Records
pedidos.xelcambio@
gmail.com

MEXICO
Ojo de Tigre
Hidalgo 1170 Centro,
Gomez Palacio, Durango
ojodetigrebar@gmail.com

BRAZIL
Coletivo Verdurada
Rua Fradique Coutinho, 294
Apto 171B
05416-000 Sao Paulo
xpedrocarvalhox@gmail.com

Ugra Press
Rua Doutor Samuel Porto 271
Apto 84
Saude – 04054-010 Sao Paulo
ugra.press@gmail.com

INDONESIA
Hardcore Hell
Pasar Santa
Ground Floor 180
Jakarta

PHILIPPINES
Mutilated Noise
Makati City, Philippines
mutilatednoisedistro@
gmail.com

THAILAND
Blast Magazine
116 Soi Tien Talay
24 BangKhunTien -
ChaiTalay, Tha Kham
BangKhunTien, Bangkok 10150
+66816923961

CANADA
Faith/Void
894 College St, Basement
Toronto, ON M6H 1A4
faithvoidshop.com

Provoke, photo by Rob Coons

ISSUE #432

FRONT COVER: Martin Sprouse

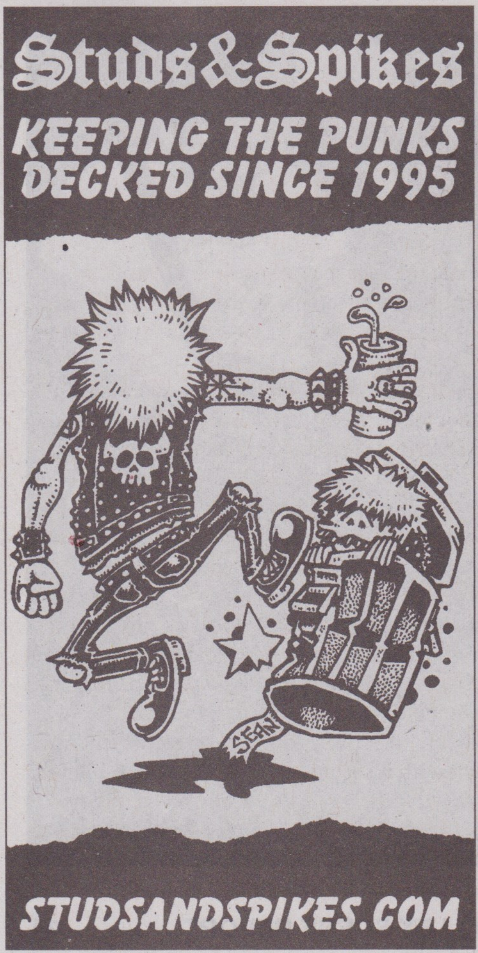
CONTRIBUTORS: Grace Ambrose, George Argyropoulos, Beth B, Baby Max Baer, Sydney Barnett, Mariam Bastani, Daniel Becker, Malkiella Benchabat, Justin Briggs, Janey Callahan, Bobby Castro, Jack Connors, Rob Coons, Cristina, Joan DeToro, Alice Espinosa-Cincotta, Ricardo Flores, Myron Fung, Lisa Genet, Layla Gibbon, Ezra Gonzales, Fidel Gutierrez, Teodoro Hernández, Violeta Hinojosa, Juliet Juarez, Alex Kress, Yumi Lee, Amy Leigh, Albert Licano, Megan March, Kristen Meloche, CJ Miller, Philip Monahan, Mark Murrman, Paco Mus, Golnar Nikpour, Samara Ornelas, Dustin Pittman, Jesse Ponkamo, Robert Reynolds, Hugo Rodas, David Rosen, Gil Rosenthal, Andres Sanchez, Ramy Silyan, Alex Simon, Farrah Skeiky, Winston Smith, Martin Sorrondeguy, Joža (Subsite), Ali Tadayon, Francesca Tirpak, Gaby Ujueta, Booz Ullrey, Bobby Valentino, Jimmy Zepeda.

Newsstand circulation through TNG. Also available from Ebullition, Revolver, Small Changes, Subterranean, and Media Solutions.

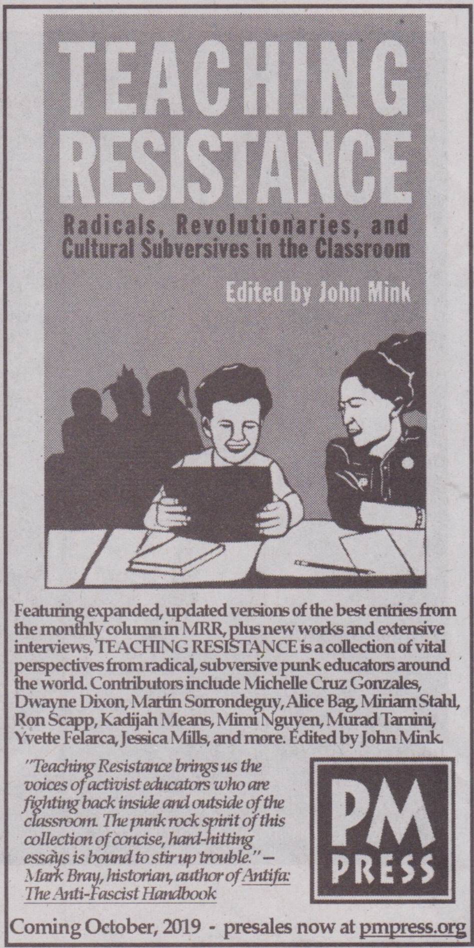
Back issues, records, shirts and more can be purchased at store.maximumrocknroll.com.

We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Information about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com.

RIO GRANDE VALLEY SCENE REPORT 31
PIÑÉN 36
CHRONOPHAGE 40
PROVOKE 45
APSURD 50
PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY + PUNK 54
ISRAELI PUNK ARCHIVE + JARADA 56
JESSE PONKAMO PHOTO SPREAD 60
WINSTON SMITH 62
CIEMO 69
EXOTICA 77
KIM GARCIA 83
DREAM NAILS 86
FAITH/VOID 89
GREEK PHOTO SPREAD 94
BUSH TETRAS 97
DESEOS PRIMITIVOS 102
SUSAN 105
THE WORLD 110
LOUDER FASTER SHORTER 117
FORRA 122
KHIIS 125
INTERFAITH WORKS 130


Studs&Spikes
KEEPING THE PUNKS DECKED SINCE 1995
SEAN
STUDSANDSPIKES.COM

DIFFIDENCE
YOUR MANAGER SAYS FOR YOU TO SHUT UP
On the interwebs now — or send us 7 bucks and we'll mail you a tape:
Black Spring
2930 Telegraph Ave
Oakland, CA 94609
diffidenceoakland.bandcamp.com


TEACHING RESISTANCE
Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Cultural Subversives in the Classroom
Edited by John Mink
Featuring expanded, updated versions of the best entries from the monthly column in MRR, plus new works and extensive interviews, TEACHING RESISTANCE is a collection of vital perspectives from radical, subversive punk educators around the world. Contributors include Michelle Cruz Gonzales, Dwayne Dixon, Martín Sorrondeguy, Alice Bag, Miriam Stahl, Ron Scapp, Kadijah Means, Mimi Nguyen, Murad Tamini, Yvette Felarca, Jessica Mills, and more. Edited by John Mink.
"Teaching Resistance brings us the voices of activist educators who are fighting back inside and outside of the classroom. The punk rock spirit of this collection of concise, hard-hitting essays is bound to stir up trouble." — Mark Bray, historian, author of Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook
PM PRESS
Coming October, 2019 - presales now at pmpress.org

PRINT OR DIE!
SKATE
STICKER GUY!
SINCE 1993 - STICKERGUY.COM
STICKER GUY & SLOVENLY RECORDINGS WOULD LIKE TO THANK
TIM YO (R.I.P.) & THE LEGIONS OF MRR SHITWORKERS THAT KEPT THE NEWSPRINT FLOWING ALL THESE YEARS!

MRR RIP FAQ

What the hell? Why is *MRR* ending run as a print fanzine?

Here's the truth: Maximum Rocknroll hasn't been solvent as a magazine in well over a decade. In other words, we haven't made enough money simply through doing the magazine to cover our ever-rising costs (rent, postage, printing, etc.); in fact, we've been operating at a stark loss. In that time, we have hustled to produce other kinds of projects that can generate revenue — e.g. the Los Crudos discography and other records, the archive project, merch, shows, etc. Through it all, all remained stubbornly committed to the monthly fanzine despite ever-increasing financial duress and frustratingly decreasing print sales. Between 2005 and 2018, revenue from the magazine nearly halved. Yet in that same time, postage, printing, and rent costs have all increased substantially. We've figured out every possible way to cut costs — we've found cheaper printers, sublet parts of the compound to renters, and reduced the print run significantly — but our yearly losses have been steep.

The numbers say it all: between 2005-2011, despite all our work to cut costs, the magazine was published at a loss of about $10,000/year on average. Between 2012–2019, that number was a loss of about $20,000/year on average. Like virtually every other print publication in the world, the print run of the magazine has also suffered in the digital age. At its height in the mid-'90s, the magazine printed about 30,000 copies a month. In the early-to-mid-2000s, we printed about 10,000–15,000/month. By 2010, that number was down to 5,000–7,000. In 2017–2018, that number has decreased to 3,000/month, with worse sell-through than ever before.

These numbers represent an ugly truth, but also in some ways a beautiful one: we've made things work over the past several years because punks the world over have been generous enough to donate their time, money, and art to MRR because we have all believed in the project. Los Crudos entrusted us with their discography and let us reap the rewards of their music. In the past decade, we received almost $80,000 in loans and donations. We've also raised funds for an ongoing archive project, which we are carrying out unabated despite the end of the print fanzine. *MRR* has always been a labor of love, but it was never meant to be a vanity project for only a fraction of punks around the world to be able to afford and read. With such low print runs and high costs, it is time to reimagine what Maximum Rocknroll can and should be going forward.

How the fuck did this happen?!

This decrease in *MRR*'s print run is the product of several factors. The utter collapse of the indie magazine distribution network, decreasing sales across print media, and the dramatic increase in postage costs (particularly international postage) have all played a part. We're not the only print periodical to suffer over the past several years; the fact that we are one of very few such publications remaining is a testament to the difficulty of maintaining a print periodical as well as MRR's dedication to the form.

We survived our move from Mordam distribution when they started to work with major labels in the early 2000s. We survived the collapse of Big Top Distribution, the last true indie magazine distributor in the United States in the mid-2000s. We survived the end of several large stores that sold hundreds of issues of the magazine a month. We survived the death of several punk distros. We've even survived the fact that the cost of one issue of *MRR* outside of the U.S. is now $20-25 due to postage, killing much of our international distro network (not to mention being prohibitively expensive for most punks the world over). Yet the cumulative effect of all of these changes has been deleterious for our overall financial well-being. Despite it all, we have kept plugging away, and have stayed committed to keeping the cover price and ad prices as low as possible. 2018 brought with it serious financial deterioration for the magazine; subscriber, advertising, and distribution numbers all dropped precipitously in this time. We all knew one day the end would come, yet despite this an untold number of shitworkers have put their everything into keeping the print magazine afloat. Today we face the inevitable future. We realized we must adapt or die, and we are choosing to adapt.

Why don't we just move somewhere cheaper?

It's no secret that the astronomical rise in rent in the post tech-boom Bay Area has had brutal effects on all kinds of subcultural projects, to say nothing of actual people who live here. Maximum Rocknroll is no exception to this rule. For the past twenty-plus years, we have been paying rent on a space in San Francisco. MRR HQ has stored our gargantuan archive, served as our base of operations (every review written in-house!), and housed most coordinators and several shitworkers alike. In the last several years, rent on MRR HQ has increased significantly. This has been the case despite our working diligently to offset costs through downsizing our space by bringing in subletters, and negotiating with a (relatively) sympathetic landlord for better terms. (We've actually been paying below-market value on our space because of our favorable rent agreement and through constant negotiation.) As early as the mid-2000s, some MRR coordinators started to look into a move that might help us cut costs—most likely to a space in Oakland. The reality has been that rent, especially on spaces large enough to house MRR, are rising exponentially everywhere in the Bay Area; we've found that we've been priced out of the area altogether. At best, if we moved, we could save a small fraction of what we now pay in rent, and this fraction, unfortunately, is not enough to offset our increasing losses.

MRR RIP FAQ (CONT.)

Why don't we just publish quarterly?

The catch-22 of having to pay monthly rent is that our ability to do so hinges on producing a monthly magazine. Publishing less frequently brings down our costs, but it also significantly brings down our revenue. Publishing quarterly would hurt more than help in terms of paying rent and dealing with other monthly costs.

What's going to happen to the house and the people who live here? And what about the records?!

By the time you read this issue, MRR (and all of the people associated with it) will have moved out of the compound that we've called home since the mid 1990s. The MRR archive—including the record collection—is being temporarily and safely stored at an offsite location.

Are we in debt? How will we pay it back?

Happily, we're not in debt, although this hasn't always been the case. At various points in the past fifteen years, we've been tens of thousands of dollars in debt to various folks for various reasons, running the gamut from friendly no-interest loans to fucked up distributor bullshit. We've managed to pay back anyone to whom we've owed money; we're not leaving anyone in a lurch.

I still want to be a part of MRR. Will I have the same role I had before? If my role is obsolete now, how can I participate?

We're all pretty broken up about the end of MRR-as-we-know-it, but we're also excited about what's to come. We also still really need shitworkers both old and new to be part of the project. One of the exciting things about MRR going forward is that what we do in the future doesn't have to be beholden to the past. In other words, we can create a vision for what Maximum Rocknroll should be in 2019 and beyond. To that end, if you're based in the Bay Area we'd love for you to be part of our home crew. If you're based outside of the Bay Area, there will be more ways than ever for you to get involved. We need people who want to help us re-imagine the project. We still need writers, editors, interviewers, columnists, and more. We're also continuing with MRR Radio, which has been on the air since 1977. The archive project—including digitizing parts of that archive—remains a major project and will need new blood. Longtime shitworker and former distro coordinator Martin Sorrondeguy is working on a Maximum Rocknroll book, which will hopefully see the light of day soon and which needs shitworkers to get involved.

You guys fucking suck.

So you've been saying since 1982. Now's as good a time as any for you to make your own fanzine (or band or website or show space or record label or book or…) and show us how much better than a bunch of politically correct record snob elitist humorless poseurs your shit can actually be.

Can we do a bunch of huge benefit shows, or something like that?

One of the open secrets at MRR is burnout; every coordinator has experienced it, to put it hastily. Those who would have the energy to put on benefits get tired of doing it. We all have jobs in addition to the work we do at MRR. At some point, nobody wants to backline this type of band-aid effort to keep afloat.

Why don't we just become a nonprofit?

That doesn't change the print climate of this century—although there are a lot of confounding factors that got us here, us not being a non-profit was never a huge aspect of it.

NOW GO START YOUR OWN LONG-RUNNING, WORLDWIDE, SOMETIMES CONTROVERSIAL, INTERNATIONAL DIY PUNK FANZINE!

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Every punk who ever got ink stains on their fingers from the pages of *Maximum Rocknroll* will have their own stories. They will have their own reason for why Tim Yohannan's eternal legacy will forever influence who they are and what they do.

This is my story of how *MRR* influenced me. I'm guessing it's a little different from those who grew up near the epicenter of the punk subculture. I grew up almost 9000 miles away from the Bay Area, in Indonesia, both a geographical and cultural world away. And yet, I ended up perched monthly on the pew of punk as Yohannan and the many noted writers over the decades—Mykel Board, George Tabb, even ol' Ben Weasel—sermonized about bands, places, records, shows and everything in between. I became enthralled and romanced by the music, the attitude and the idea that pissing people off is a righteous way to live.

I had to travel far to get my issues. *Maximum Rocknroll* was not easily obtainable in Indonesia in the '90s. We didn't have decent bookstores let alone alternative book stores, and if there was a punk subculture brewing within the military dictatorship, I didn't find it. My dad did travel for work however, and Singapore was a regular destination: a city that did stock the zine. And it was during my regular pilgrimages that I would stock up on issues of punk zines—*Maximum Rocknroll, Flipside, Punk Planet,* anything I could get my hands on—and as many CDs as I could possibly afford and carry home.

Maybe for some, picking up the latest issue of their favorite punk rag wasn't a big deal, but for me, it was.

These days, the banality of having Ramones t-shirts sold at teen clothing stores aside, it is difficult to escape the aesthetic of punk. However, the age-old question of what is punk and what is not is still being asked. I've never pursued the punk 'look' very hard. I only ever spiked my hair in a mohawk once in my life, and once, I was the only person at a Rancid show who was wearing regular pants. For me it has always been the music that mattered most. I loved discovering obscure bands, incredibly small labels run out of people's garages, shows in basements and records released because people loved doing it. I hated pop music and the saccharine culture of the mainstream and I loved rebelling against it. I loved the DIY ethic and I loved the resourcefulness and drive of those who wanted to create something against the grain. *Maximum Rocknroll* had all of that.

The zine was of course, not without its own controversies. After the punk explosion of the mid-'90s, Yohannan clamped down on the zine's stringent rules on what they would and would not cover. Their policies were often deemed too narrow in the scope of punk, and elitist. Some of the genre's most noted figures including Jello Biafra criticized the zine for its practices, and some of its own writers splintered off and formed alternative zines (*Heartattack* zine and *Punk Planet*) that were far more flexible in their coverage. Perhaps I was too young or too far away to fully understand the controversies back when I was 14/15 years old. Looking back, though, I understand where Yohannan was coming from, as I understand where those who disagreed with him came from too. At the time, though, I just wanted to read the zine, all of them, and yearned to find out about new music and an alternative to the mainstream lifestyle.

As the globe became more connected, I saw growth in the ideals of punk in the form of many young punk bands. Indonesia and Singapore, just like in many parts of the world, became home to more and more bands that found a home in the pages of *MRR*. Scene reports from all over the world sounded more like Gilman Street, and while some of that started because *Dookie* and *Smash* sold millions of copies, it was also because the words within *MRR* had profound effects on people like myself and countless others. Sure, a lot of the bands sounded like Green Day, but there were also a bunch that sounded like Crimpshrine, or Blatz. *MRR* was instrumental in educating a generation about the possibilities and different sounds of punk.

Now more than 20 years since I read my first issue of *MRR*, I can say that the DIY attitude underpins almost everything I do. At least I'd like to think so. Sure, I like nice things, I pay my bills and have a regular job. But I like thinking differently, and I like challenging people's expectations. If punk rock is not an attitude, then you can keep your safety pins and leather jackets.

Thanks to *MRR* I started a band when I was 17. We were pretty shit, but we were loud and had a fucking blast. What's more punk rock than that?

MRR also inspired me to start a zine in 2001. It was a way for me to express my opinions, write about bands and connect with other likeminded people.

From the original radio show to the mag's steadfast black and white simplicity, Maximum Rocknroll's influence managed to circumnavigate the globe countless times over for a generation and more.

The legacy of *Maximum Rocknroll* can mean different things to different people. My story is one of many I'm sure.

Maximum Rocknroll influenced people all over the world to start bands, start zines, book shows and organize communities. Despite the shift from hard copy to online zine I know their influence will remain relevant in today's digital world. It's an outlook, a belief and a way of life that begins with an attitude.

Start something.

—Billy Ho

Here's hoping the news of *MRR* ceasing publication in print turns out to be an elaborate April Fools' joke. And if it does, well played.

—Kenny

Hey guys. Discovering *MRR* and *Not So Quiet...* when I was 13 in 1982 or '83 was arguably the most pivotal event of my life. Seriously. rediscovering the *MRR* radio shows is among the best things to happen to me in the last few years. I look forward to the new one every Sunday. Here's the rub. Is there any way you could go back to attaching a release date to the shows. Seems like a small thing but I can't be the only who uses this ancient system to arrange events in time; and when I pick on my lame poseur old man friends, I like to be able to say, 'listen to Layla's show from mid October 2017' or whatever. Punk takes place in the present tense and your weekly shows are proof of that.

Thanks
Rich.

*Maximum Rocknroll*ers

Heart-fuckin-broken! So sad to find out *MRR* is going to be calling it quits after all these years. Have been reading since way back in '84 or '85. Have had a sub almost constantly since then. Have been broke and wife has cancer all last year so boo fucking hoo i know but I am putting off paying one of my bills to renew my sub. Realize that I already missed January 2019 but please renew my 6-issue sub, also realize that the last issue will be out in the spring but I don't need a refund on a 6 issue sub. Keep the change and thanks for so many years of reading pleasure Gonna miss *Maximum Rocknroll* and all that you stand for. Of course the person reading this probably could not give a shit about what I think or feel about losing an old friend.

Low tide for punk rock brothers and sisters. Up the fucking punks!

—H

MRR,

I discovered *MRR* in 1998 at a now long gone record store in Cincinnati. My first issue was actually Tim Yohannan's last (I still have it). Through *MRR* I was introduced to bands and politics that completely changed my life. I looked forward to reading columns by Mykel Board, George Tabb, Bruce Roehrs, Lefty Hooligan, Felix Havoc, and so many others. The thought of the print edition ending leaves me with regret and some guilt. The guilt isn't from not doing my part in buying the zine, I subscribed off and on and always bought issues when I saw them for over twenty years...My regret is that I didn't contribute something, anything. A review, an interview. It was something I thought I would get around to but it just never happened. So it goes. I will continue to listen to *MRR* Radio via podcast and look forward to whatever you do next!

Thank you!
Nick Flaspohler
Cincinnati

Dear MRR Board of Directors,

Your announcement immediately shocked and angered me. After two months of conversations and thinking about everything I still think this was a despicable move. I've done shitwork for a couple years now, and I was supposed to come by the compound that Sunday for facilitation training until I got told about this decision. Your decision to go online isn't great, but what really fucks me up is that shitworkers had no input or warning on this decision. We were informed at the same time as anyone who happens to follow the instagram. Not even the current coordinators were part of the final vote, even as they were sitting at the meeting! Good luck with finding a room in the Bay…

I got involved because I saw MRR as an institution and resource for punks and radicals to shape our own dialogue, put into the magazine what we want to see, and pay forward the punk wealth to every new freshman class of punks. It was crazy to me that 4 years into teen punk life I had never been exposed to the biggest punk magazine, which was volunteer run and in my city! I came in wanting MRR to reach the kids before VICE sucks them into hype capitalist subculture, and I honestly felt I could invigorate that change. I was naïve and stupid to expect this. Speaking with a number of you helped me realize that you would have never allowed us that freedom to meaningfully repurpose these resources in a way that makes sense for us.

I wish I could say your decision was made in good faith, but I'm not so sure. Ramy, another shitworker, had his column approved by the columns coordinator until y'all rejected it for print, with no discussion or explanation. For context, Ramy is someone who does not agree with your decision and how it was handled, and his column expressed that. You evicted Vicky as her room now sits vacant. Any houseless person out in the rain should come sleep at the compound right now, but maybe that would endanger the collectibles?? (I guess this is not where I should argue against private property.) Other actions and language you have used reveals your self-conscious, tactical approach on making this come off as a supported decision rather than a "coup" by your select group of people. This framing makes me question the public reasons vs. private reasons behind the decision. I have to wonder how different the conversations were in the exclusive Board meetings that didn't include shitworkers or current coordinators.

This looks like power grab by board members, holding onto MRR for its role in your personal legacies. Many of you are former coordinators and people who've put in years of hard work, and this attachment leaves people invested in what MRR is, even after they have moved on. This happens with the hierarchy that MRR has, as volunteer-run does not equal collectively-run. This is a problem, if that isn't already obvious. Joining your Board of Directors requires the emotional/economic stability to become the "coordinator," or else one must be a gung-ho shitworker that is relentless in carving a place for oneself until the initiated decide they should join the Board. In a mostly white group of people, who is going to feel they are allowed to take up space? Who is left feeling isolated and discouraged? I was honestly shocked at the ratio of white faces at the year-end meeting this year.

You are afraid to pass "your" brand on to a new generation with different definitions of punk, different visions of the space MRR occupies. You see problems with where new people are taking the punk community. But newer people also see problems with what punk has been. Personally, I could not give a shit what some white garage rockers are putting out on vinyl this year, and I'm fine with weening off of that and opening up to real freaks doing new, refreshing shit, whatever that may be. And this friction is natural and should be seen through! It just sucks that you don't want to leave us with some resources, institutions, and pricey Japanese records.

Of course every generation has their own way of doing radical music and punk, and of course the old guard will have difficulty recognizing its value. Is this surprising? Changes will happen whether the MRR Board of Directors is with them or not, but it is your decision on how you will pass on the resources you have created. If you want to leave us an MRR website, fine. This is regretfully out of my control. I truly fear that my generation of punks will never be given a chance to value the beauty of what *Maximum Rocknroll* magazine was, and your archives of back issues teeming with punk content will be irrelevant and forgotten, left collecting dust for the few who dig deep enough. If this is the future you envision, you're on track. I came to MRR with enthusiasm for endless possibilities, envisioning this magazine to be vital for creative radicals all across the globe.

I haven't delved much into why I don't think this is a good decision, because the thinking behind it relates to the problematic power structure at the magazine. I'm still convinced a move to a storefront in the East Bay would work, that SF rent was expensive as fuck. Don't forget

that we punks are resourceful, creative, crazy, diligent, persistent, optimistic…

I can no longer write reviews or do shitwork for whatever MRR will be. You have made it clear that my contributions and energy are meaningless and less important than those before me. (Sidenote: Please quit mentioning a "superteam" coordinating these last couple magazines, you're indirectly shitting on the people you're not including who've put their blood into this). Sadly MRR can never be recreated because of its timing, history, and institutional wealth. Maybe one day it will become a punk community resource that doesn't mirror capitalist oppressive society so closely and I could come back. I still naively hope for this future. My heart is punk and that flame will only be extinguished when I'm dead.

I am not soliciting a response in the magazine, as I've hashed out many of these points over and over with MRR folks of various status. I'm afraid of my concerns being diverted into other talking points, which I've already experienced. But if you want to clarify anything for readers or for your vanity, you are obviously free to do so.

I'm very interested in conversations about this situation or anything I've written here. Animosity stresses me out and I just want punks to take the world. Hit me up and we can go to a show/skate/brown bag it/ email each other: tylerbirch@protonmail.com

-Hungry Kat

I'm not going to offer a rebuttal to Tyler/Hungry Kat's letter—the feelings of disappointment expressed within are obvious and valid. They are also very much shared by everyone involved in the decision to cease publication of MRR *as a print zine. A decision like this was always going to be somewhat contentious. The group who had the unfortunate responsibility to make the call are all people who have dedicated much of their lives, not to mention their blood, sweat and tears, to MRR, including people who have worked on MRR continuously since the radio show days, former coordinators, and many other longtime shitworkers. We did not take the decision lightly. We agree that the way the information was delivered was flawed. All I can say is that we did the best we could at the time, with the best interests of Maximum Rocknroll at heart.*

—Allan McNaughton on behalf of the MRR Board

Dear *MRR* and hosts of Shitworkers past, present, and future,

Thank you for your decades of work and hopefully decades to come. Thank you for being the punk rock internet before there was a real internet. Thank you for allowing me and thousands of others to speak through your pages and records and radio. Thank you for putting tens of thousands of people in touch with like minds all over the world. Thank you for giving so many bands exposure through your record reviews and interviews and scene reports. Thank you for teaching me about punk rock in Iceland and Italy and Ireland and Iowa. Thank you for telling me about Ohlo Seco and the Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers.

Punk rock isn't dead as long as there are square pegs who won't be pounded down into the round holes. *Maximum Rocknroll* isn't dead becuse it's going out of print. Your work isn't done yet. Keep going

Love and Respect,
Bob Suren
Formerly of Brandon, FL
Currently of Austin, TX

Thank You MRR!

For the 25+ years of supporting Moo Cow Fanzine and Moo Cow Records. Without you, labels and zines like mine would never have found the audience it has. I can never thank you enough.

OUT NOW:

NOX NOVACULA 7"

Death Rock from Seattle
Moo Cow Records #53

Temperance "Searching For Silence" LP
Rhode Island Melodic Hardcore from 1995
First time on vinyl! Moo Cow Records #5

Next: Death Ridge Boys 7"
Portland hardcore punk

moocowrecords@gmail.com
moocowrecords.bandcamp.com
www.moocowrecords.com

"Paying some serious stylistic debts to the transitional period between post-punk and C86 in the early-to-mid '80s UK underground"
–Erika Elizabeth, MRR

Neutrals "Kebab Disco" LP:
May 24th 2019 on Emotional Response
Perfect for target practice.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

DEAD BROKE REKERDS

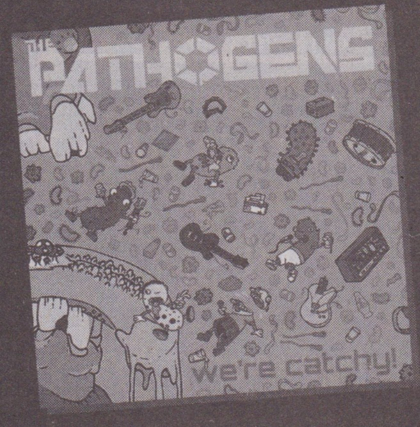
OUT NOW

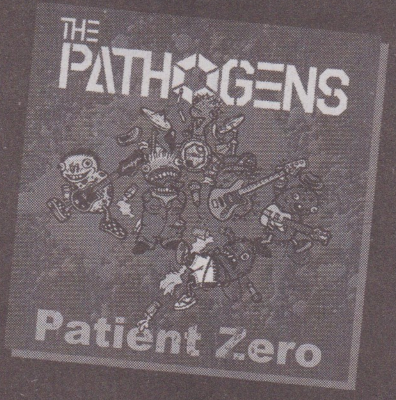
IRON CHIC/TOYS THAT KILL - SPLIT 12" LP
PORCUPINE - "What You've Heard Isn't Real" 12" (Ex-Hüsker Dü)
RADON - "More Of Their Lies" LP
BASEMENT BENDERS- "Shrapnel Songs" LP
PARASITES / RAGING NATHANS- Split 7"EP
SOMERSET THROWER- "Godspeed" LP
GIANT PEACH- "But You Made Me Such A Beautiful Thing" LP
HEAVY POCKETS- "Pure Evil" LP
BEDFORD FALLS- "Send More Bees" LP
CANADIAN RIFLE- "Peaceful Death" LP
FIFTEEN- "The Choice Of A New Generation" CD/LP/Cass Reissue
"Swain's First Bike Ride" LP/CD/Cass + 7"EP Reissues

COMING SOON

HIDDEN SPOTS- "NEW ME/NEW YOU" LP | SNUGGLE- "HOLIDAY HEART" 12"
SPIT-TAKE- "FALLING STAR" LP | SAMIAM- "TRIPS" TAPE | MARTHA- ALBUM TAPES

THE PATHOGENS





New LP out Now!
"we're catchy" 14 songs

Debut 7" EP!
"patient zero" 4 songs

Cinder Block (tilt) & Jesse Luscious (blatz) double vocal attack!
"Patient Zero is a debut album that combines so many years of punk rock experience, it feels like it was put out by a classic outfit at the height of their power."
Catch 'em on their European tour April 2019!
Visit 'em at: www.facebook.com/thepathogens/
www.thepathogens1.bandcamp.com

Distributed by:
Revolver USA,
Alternative Tentacles &
Ebullition Records.
Available in person & online from
1-2-3-4 GO! (Oakland & SF) &
Tower District Records (Fresno).

1-2-3-4 GO! RECORDS
ebullition
ZAFIO RECORDS

ECONO PRESS

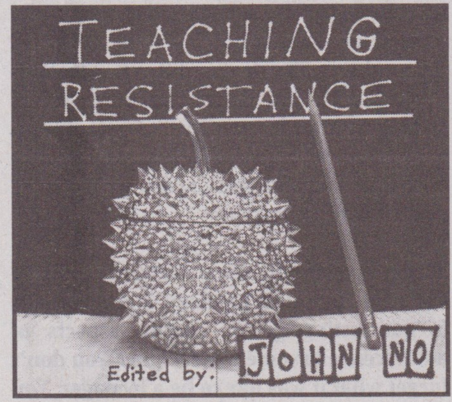
BY THE PUNKS...FOR THE PUNKS.

REST IN PUNK
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL!

PRINTING PUNK ROCK
FOR OVER 30 YEARS!
7" COVERS, INSERTS, J-CARDS & MORE!
EMAIL FOR A QUOTE:
ECONOPRESS@GMAIL.COM

NEW WEBSITE: ECONOPRESSPRINTS.COM

COLUMNS



Martin Sorrondeguy is a queer, Latinx punk. He sings for bands you may have heard of like LIMP WRIST and LOS CRUDOS, he runs the record label Lengua Armada, is a longtime shitworker for MRR, directed the 1999 punk classic film Beyond the Screams: A U.S. Latino Hardcore Punk Documentary, *and is a top-notch photographer who has authored several books full of amazing photos he shot of bands from all over the world. Martin also happens to be a dedicated teacher who has been involved in radical education for decades, and puts as much passion into his classroom work as he is known for in punk.*

This month's column features a short excerpt from an extended, wide-ranging interview with Martin that will be published in full in the upcoming book Teaching Resistance: Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Cultural Subversives in the Classroom *(PM Press, available in Fall of 2019). Martin was one of the original inspirations for this column, and I am very grateful that he was willing to share part of his story as a teacher, a radical, and a punk, in all of its complicated, intersectional, interwoven, and inspirational glory.*

Martin: Before I went back to SF State [for a full public school teaching credential], and when I was working at *Maximum*, I worked at an alternative high school in the East Bay. That was a teaching job where I was doing really cool stuff, and a lot of my students were punks and rockers and weirdo kids, you know, freaks and awesome kids that I loved, and that's where I had a lot of liberty. I actually did a history class and it was the history of subcultures in the United States from the 1930s forward. It started out with the Zoot suits, like the *Pachuco* Movement out of LA coming out of the jazz scene, and went into Beatniks and all this stuff, all the way to punk and hip-hop, and so on and so forth. I loved that job, and then I did my teaching credential, and there was a period I was going to walk away from education but I kept getting sucked into it somehow.

MRR: Wow. So you did kind of have a dream curriculum, where you were able to structure things, almost to tie them to the other side of your life that maybe you weren't so frank about in the classroom.

Martin: In terms of my "alternative life," they knew everything about me. I ended up one day with one of my bosses saying, "Martin, can you go to the computer lab and change the screensavers?" because the students had put all the Limp Wrist lyrics for "Fags Hate God" on all the screen savers! I was like "Oh my god, I'm so sorry!" And I just told the kids, "You guys, don't do that!" [*laughter*]. But it was a really amazing place to be, it was wild.

MRR: It's fascinating that you were able to share with those particular students your "other life."

Martin: I had kids who were in my class with Limp Wrist shirts on, so they knew who I was. I mean, two of the students, these two young girls, these punk girls, they jumped on a greyhound all the way to Austin, Texas to see Limp Wrist. I just remember their parents called me, "Martin, can you…" and I was like "I will fly there, and as soon as I'm there I will find them, and they will stay with me. Where I will basically take care of them, wherever I stay they stay."

MRR: Field trip! Just give me a permission slip and we'll get all this stuff organized. No problem.

Martin: [*laughter*] ...So let me just move forward into going into a more state run school…

MRR: ...the school in Oakland. What was the difference in terms of how you were able to interact at that school with the people in charge of the school, the administration, the parents, the student population, and how did you reconcile those relationships with your own personal identities within punk, activism, and queer culture?

Martin: It really did not work. Let me rephrase that—it would not have worked so what I actually did was go to the courts and legally change my name. It was to protect myself and to protect the job I was going to do, because I know I'm a good teacher. And I knew I could really bring something to the classroom, into these kids' lives, that has nothing to do with my music, with what I do, with my art—nothing. I can teach these kids skills, and I can teach them a lot of stuff about just life, and in order to protect that there was no way I could walk into a classroom as "Martin Sorrondeguy" successfully without it blowing up in my face. It came really close on numerous occasions to blowing up in my face…My students would be like, "We googled you, we didn't find anything on you." And I'm like, "It's because I'm a really boring person. I don't do anything, I just work and go home."

That was the sort of identity I had at the school. A lot of the students, they didn't know. Only one teacher once said, "Hey, Mr. Rock Star!" and I'm like, "What?" She was a teacher across the hall from me. It was at lunchtime and all these kids were in the hall and they all look at me and I go, "What do you mean?" And she's like, "Hey Mr. Rock Star, I heard you're in like a rock'n'roll band." I just looked at her and I go "I'm not in a rock'n'roll band." I felt bad. I denied it, and she felt really dumb and all the kids laughed at her. But later I pulled her aside and I told her, "Hey, you know what? I'm sorry I did that to you. Yes, I'm in a band but I don't want the kids to know about that. That's a part of my life that I don't like sharing and making public."

She was really apologetic, and said "I'm so sorry." I said, "No, no, it's fine." She asked why it would be an issue, and I knew she was an openly lesbian teacher, and I said, "Look, I'm super openly queer. It's not for kids." Then she's like, "I'm sorry, I get it." Asked how she found out, and she said that someone down at a district meeting—who had huge plugs and was like a punker—told her "you have a famous punk rocker working at your school." They actually revealed it, they disclosed that. And I was just like, "Oh my god, I can't believe this person did that!" I mean, what happened to "What we do is secret," right? Jesus!

MRR: Right. You really would have to maintain a double life.

Martin: I think that's where my story gets really unique. In order to do what I wanted to do and to be effective, I felt that I needed to go and legally change my name...I think things have changed so much in terms of private versus public and who we are. In the past there were old punk teachers who were punks way back in the early '80s and nobody would ever figure it out, or if they had some weird punk name, but I was always Martin Sorrondeguy, Martin of Los Crudos, Martin from Limp Wrist, Martin from whatever, and to try to kind of cover that up was really difficult. The only way that I could see it happening successfully was by doing what I did.

I'm glad I did it, because within days kids [in your class] are googling you. They want to find out who you are. They want details, you know? I'm glad I did what I did, and I think it was one of the smartest things I've ever done. I was able to do the four years that I put into that school in in the best possible way. And that was awesome.

MRR: Did it end up okay? Was there anything in the end that you'd feel comfortable talking about?

Martin: You know what? Everything ended up fine. I think there was something in me that felt like there needed to be a change, and it really was because I was focusing on my photography again. I was kind of unhappy with the school in general…you have to understand, the school I worked in, in the four years I was there there were five principals.

It was really rough, when I spoke to other teachers and their experiences I was jealous, like "what the fuck am I doing?" Where am I, you know? What am I dealing with? It was really unfortunate because I got along, I kid you not, with I'd say 98% of my students. Even kids who I thought hated me and hated my classes. One boy came in a year after he had been gone and he said to me, "I really miss your class, because this was my favorite class." That shocked me because the kid did zero in my class, and I think it was the way I ran the class. The kids enjoyed being there. I had kids in my class for who every other fucking teacher they had was down their fucking necks constantly, and giving them shit and trying to get them expelled, trying to get them fucking kicked out, like everything, you know? Trying to expel these kids from a school or get them suspended.

I went to this meeting with this young African-American girl, she didn't even live in a straight up home. She lived in a group home. Every teacher was there, and I just remember all of them going around and saying all this really negative shit about her, and I was like "I have no problems with her in my class. She comes in tardy but that's the bulk of it, I have not had issues with her my classes." She leaned over and told her guardian "This is the teacher I like" [*laughter*]. It was because I created an environment in my class that kids legitimately felt that they could be in and not get fucked with.

MRR: So tell me how you did that, tell me some techniques.

Martin: It was a struggle at first, it wasn't something I went into it and was like "Oh I got this down." It wasn't like that. It took time and it took a lot of figuring out, but I just was very stern, I wasn't this loose teacher. I mean, I don't think I cracked a fucking smile till Christmas time. There was something about that structure that a lot of the kids like, but the thing is I knew my shit, you know what I mean? There would be some clown that would do something really weird on the computer and would think that I wouldn't know how to fix it, and I would hit a couple keys and get out of that mess so they realized "This guy really knows what he's doing." There's something to be said about when you really know your stuff, and you're killing that subject, there's a level of respect that comes with that. But then I was also very attentive to the students. I remember I had a lot of inner city Oakland kids. I remember one girl coming in one morning just crying, she came in late, and I had one of those electric kettles in my class. I would have water going and I remember just making her tea and just setting it right in front of her. You know, just keeping going with my lesson, and you could just see on her face like, "Oh my god." They sense when you care about them. I think there's a thing that some teachers, maybe they don't care enough, or maybe they do and don't know how to care. Or they don't know how to go, "Oh my god, there's something really weird happening with the student right now, what can I do to let them know that I notice and that I do care about them?" I'm really like, "Oh my god, something's wrong here and what can I do to make them feel a little more at ease?"

So stuff like that, I have bottles of water… it's just really basic stuff, but the way I put their artwork up on the on the walls, just displaying their work, making them realize that what they had to say or create has value, that was huge for them. I mean, they would walk into the classroom and run up to the walls like little kids, just so proud of seeing their piece on the wall. I also did projects where there was relevancy, as I did to help this poster project where they had to research a health issue that was going on in their community.

They had to do legitimate research, and what we created using photography and Photoshop was a health poster, an awareness poster. So whether it was "I think smoking is terrible, it causes cancer" or whatever it was, every student would address a health issue in their poster. And the last year that I was there, a few of the student posters got picked up [by the city] and were running on buses around town, which is really awesome.

The other thing, though, is that I'm not going to paint a cute picture of [the school] because there were situations that were really messed up, and not good, and not cool, and not positive. The really difficult situations every teacher has. That's teaching. You're dealing with adolescents, well, I was at least, and that comes with a lot of baggage. There's a lot to think about and unpack when you're dealing with adolescents.

MRR: Absolutely. To a certain extent so much of the punk ideology and approach is not letting go of certain aspects of adolescence in some ways, right? You don't forget what it was like to be a teenager. You don't forget, and I think that is one of the things that actually makes punks such good teachers a lot of the time.

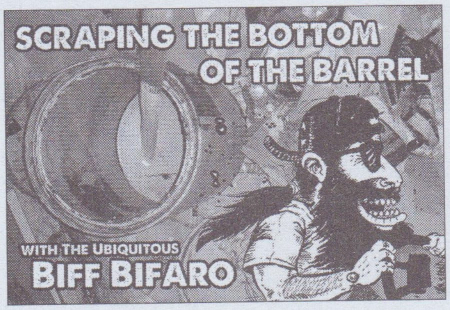
Martin: I think so. There were definitely situations, and depending on who it was and what students…There were a little gang of lesbian girls in my one of my third period classes, and they were obsessed with me. They were always fishing and fishing and trying to find out if I was gay. I would say "Oh, I'm going out of town." And they would ask a question like "Oh, who are you going out of town with?" "A friend." "Uh huh. What kind of friend?" "A friend". Trying to get it out of me, you know? I remember finally, like, towards the end of the year, I told them. "Uhh, since you're fishing, it's my boyfriend." And the look on their faces, they were just glowing. They realized "Oh my god!"

MRR: Oh, you made their year!

Martin: Oh, and then they were like, "Can you be our chaperone at Pride?" "Hell no!" It was funny. [*laughter*]

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K–12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. The column will continue in a new form after the print version of MRR ceases production, so keep those submissions coming!

Also, as mentioned before keep an eye out for the Teaching Resistance book, coming in Fall 2019 on PM Press, including an unabridged version of the interview this issue. It's been a nice journey, print mag; gonna miss you but looking forward to what the future brings for MRR *–John No, Teaching Resistance editor*



An opening thought for all you readers going down with the ship before my final column commences in the last issue of our dear *Maximum Rocknroll*. I am sure that this issue will be filled with nostalgia and farewell columns, letters, articles, etc. Personally, I decided to get that out of the way last month since the situation had been weighing so heavily on my mind. This month my column will read as if this thing that I love were not imminently coming to an end. I am holding on to very strong hopes that a core group of us who are still driven by and dedicated to the existence of physical copy print media will get together and start something new out of the smoldering ashes of the once mighty *MRR*. In the meantime, if any of you dear readers are interested in continuing to follow the misadventures of this somewhat inept weirdo in the form of my fumbling dum-dum ramblings, I will occasionally be contributing columns to the National Teen Set Outsider based out of Rochester, NY which may now be the longest running punk print zine remaining, and I also just contributed a column to the first print issue of *The Adam Sandler Appreciation Society of Cleveland* coinciding with the First Annual Adam Sandler Fest, the new yearly punk festival/most recent wonderfully idiotically, very-Cleveland event. Hey, gotta scratch this itch wherever I can now that I am no longer needed here at *Maximum*. But here we are, the tides are turning, the times they are a-changing, now is the winter of our discontent, and by that I of course mean that it is really cold in Buffalo right now and that I am unhappy about the situation causing *MRR* to leave us.

I have done some incredibly stupid things throughout my years of heavy involvement in punk. I have always been the kind of guy to say yes to just about anything. Sometimes that can get you into a bit of trouble, but I suppose I would rather regret making a mistake than regret not taking a chance. Over the past few years I have adopted the motto "I'll try anything twice, in case I got it wrong the first time."

A handful of years ago I was a approached by a casual acquaintance from Pittsburgh about driving his band on tour. We kicked around ideas and schedules and figured out that it would be a good fit. The band consisted of this friend, a former roommate of mine who I had lost touch with over the last few years when she moved away, and two guys I had maybe met once or twice but didn't know hardly at all. The main problem with the planning of this tour was that it was to take place starting all the way out on the west coast, as their singer would be out there finishing her time working trimming weed. The tour would essentially start out west, work its way down the coast, then zig-zag through the center of the country making its way back to Pittsburgh, PA which is where they all called home at the time. Being from Buffalo, NY, the prospect of starting a tour in Portland, OR that I was driving was a bit of a daunting task, but having never done it before I of course enthusiastically said yes to the idea.

Having this problem where I constantly agree to things without thinking them through, and simultaneously being absolutely awful at scheduling, I of course decided to make this already idiotic idea even more difficult on myself by agreeing to play a gig in Buffalo on the same day that I was supposed to begin the drive. This is a recurring problem in my life. I once agreed to play a gig in Rochester, NY with one of my bands, another gig in Syracuse, NY with a different one of my bands, and was committed to being at a party commemorating the grand opening of the screen-printing shop that I used to run in Buffalo all in the same day, but I digress. Having already agreed to this gig in Buffalo I planned on having the van all loaded up and ready to go so that I could play the gig then just hit the road. Looking back it seems really silly to have rearranged plans and made a trip more difficult in order to play a forgettable hardcore punk set with my regrettable band to a tiny unfazed crowd in a basement almost exclusively used for metal gigs, but in the moment I wouldn't have changed a damn thing.

We all know how annoying the concept of "punk time" can be, I assume, but it has always seemed to me that at the very least there is a certain consistency to it. With gigs usually beginning roughly an hour to an hour and a half after flyered time, it is fairly easy to estimate when gigs will begin and how late to show up in order to miss whatever bat-shit wildcard may have been thrown on the gig as an opening act. I am, to this day, still incredibly confused by hipster time, art time, and in the case of this story, heavy metal time. There seems to be far less uniformity with all of those realms. I have seen metal gigs start very promptly and on the flip side of the coin have witnessed them beginning an ungodly amount of time later than I ever would have expected. Perhaps this has something to do with all the different sub-genres of metal and them working on their own clock systems. I imagine that death metal time and grindcore time would be similar to all the pots and pans music but could potentially be very different from NWOBHM time or hair metal time. But then again, isn't it always hair metal time? This seems like a debate that could go around and around and some modern individual has probably made a meme, or whatever you millennials refer to captioned photos on the internet as these days, depicting the differences. Not remembering which subgenre of metal the gig was that my band played, I cannot use this knowledge to add it to a chart of the appropriate sub-genre of metal's lateness scale, but regardless, this show ran unbelievably late. By the time I finally left Buffalo it was hours later than I had originally intended to leave town. The trip was off to a great start.

The sun was already rising as I made my way to my initial destination of Pittsburgh. Pulling up to the house I was told to meet the band at, I noticed the one member that I already knew walking across the street. Obnoxiously blaring on the horn and yelling out the window at him, without taking into account how early in the morning it was, I started to slightly question my choices of pounding energy drinks and Sheetz soy lattes on the way down. I parked the van and got out to give him a hug and started helping the boys load in their gear and personal effects. It was around this time that my friend informed me that he wouldn't be joining myself and the two other unknown band members in our trek across the country. Allegedly he had to work the next two days, tho I still have my suspicions to this day that he didn't want to be in the van for a bonkers 2,500 mile journey, so he would be flying to Portland to meet up with us. Mocking their counterpart for having to work before saying farewell, these two handsome lads piled into the van and without so much as introducing themselves simply said "Hey Biff. Let's go!" Sure, I could have admitted that I didn't remember their names, had a brief awkward moment of re-introducing ourselves, and gone on from there, but we had a three day journey ahead of us so I figured I would make a little game out of it and vowed to figure their names out before we arrived without asking them. What can I say, I love games!

I have noticed in my time traveling that one of two things tends to happen between the people in the confines of a vehicle on an extended trip. Either the time spent in

tight quarters together can really cement a friendship in a short amount of time making it feel like you've been friends forever, or it can put strain on the existing friendship and you end up trying to put as much distance between yourselves as possible within the confines of the van. Spanning the entire country in a three day timeframe was sure to exacerbate such feelings, but which way would it go?

We were underway with a fresh oil change, a full tank of gas, and caffeine surging through our veins. After a few hours of lighthearted chit chat and missed opportunities to learn some first names, one of them asked if he could put on some music. In a scenario like this of potential new punk friends I would standardly pop on something like *Shock Troops* which has always proved to be something of a great equalizer for punks getting to know one another. Who the hell doesn't like that album and know pretty much every damn word? Handing over the controls he turned on the first album we would listen to on that trip and of all things what he selected was a score by Ennio Morricone from the 1969 Italian film *Metti, Una Sera A Cena,* which just so happens to be a soundtrack that I greatly enjoy. Once we had finished making fools of ourselves goofily sing-chanting in our falsetto voices along with the vocalists and playing the dashboard like keyboard together, it started to take shape just what kind of guys I had here. Immediately following that up, the next musical selection was the 1979 *Living Room* demo by the Feederz and any doubts I may have had just entirely flew out the window along with the bottles of piss being dumped to limit the amount of stops we would make.

The trip began to fly by. Names were learned, states were spanned, very few stops were made other than the necessities of getting more caffeinated Sweet Drank or at whatever Taco John's we could find to grab another Six Pack and a Pound. The trip went by in a blur. We giggled about absolute nonsense as the sillies inevitably crept in. We delved deep into the realm of discussing in-depth relationship woes. Time seemed to only be told by how often George Noory came on our radio for another Coast 2 Coast AM broadcast. We sat through a four hour discussion on the history of ouija and other talking boards one night, and then one where the guest ranted and raved about the numerous health benefits of magnesium the next. Both broadcasts had us on the edge of our seats. I am not entirely sure how it happened or if the main clock we were using must have been broken or something as it seemed to be stuck on taco time, but we actually ended up making the entire trip in far less time than it should have taken us. My new friends and I sharing the wheel made it so that we pretty much made the trip in the amount of time it takes to do that drive if you don't stop to rest.

We showed up at their singer's house around mid-day, a day ahead of schedule. I remember walking up to the door and still chatting and laughing with the two of them as we knocked on the door. When greeted by their singer and asked how the drive was, the consensus seemed to be unquestioningly that it was "great." The other one of them had only recently arrived from his flight and was napping when we arrived but our caffeine fueled insanity made short work of his ability to sleep. The rest of the tour was a blast and I have some very fond memories of it, including catching up with my former roommate who was in the band in a very intense and beautiful way of sitting on someone's lawn in Los Angeles and having her give me a tarot reading. It inspired a wonderful conversation and it felt to me as if no time had passed in our friendship at all. When I think back to this tour though, most of what I remember is that initial drive and how, with the right company, a daunting task can turn into a wonderful experience.

Ending on a serious note, farewell *MRR,* when this issue is delivered to me I fully expect to begin sobbing as I peel open the envelope and dive in cover to cover one last time. If anyone is involved with other punk publications and wants a columnist I am now officially a free agent (Sorry Will, don't worry, my *National Teen Set Outsider* column about obsessively tracking down pinball machines to play while traveling will get to you on time). Hit me up at xFeral_Kidx@yahoo.com for some soon to be much needed punk interaction.

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

What's up, *Maximum*. Rather than write you a goodbye love letter, this is a love letter to my band.

I don't remember if I started this column first, or if we started Correspondences first, they started around the same time, and I'll always associate their beginnings. I moved to Portland, Maine in 2010 because my partner started midwifery school. It was a weird time in my life, because I'd just left the Bay and for the last few years I just. Kept. Having. Shitty. Experiences with queers. This followed me to Portland, too. I had two unrelated shitty transmisogyny things happen with trans guys I didn't know, *in my fucking house*, pretty soon after I got to Portland.

I was not trusting queers.

It sucked, because I didn't want to hang out with queers, but also, have you ever hung out with straight people? They're even worse.

I spent a lot of time in my room trying to figure out how to be my own band.

I don't remember why I was at the party where I first spoke with Emily and Lee. Maybe self-harm? I think I was talking to Emily about how I'd been playing guitar and singing in this band Angela Chase for the last three years and I was stoked to be playing bass again, because before I left the Bay Francesca gave me a bass and bass has always been my favorite. Emily played cello. Like, knew how to play it. Like, went to school for it. She'd been in a million music projects and knew what she was doing. So we were talking and I think Lee overheard us and was like "I got some drums because I was trying to join What Cheer Brigade but I didn't get in because I don't really know how to play them," and Emily and I were like "let's fucking start a band."

"Dude!" either Emily or I said. "We could play doom metal! That way you don't have to play anything fast or complicated!"

Sonya and Alicia, the other two members of Angela Chase, had seen a doom metal band once by mistake and had thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen—to the point that we would often bust into dumb fake doom metal between songs or to open sets. But because Lee didn't have a lot of experience playing drums, suddenly unironic doom metal was on the table.

You ever notice how stupid ideas are often great ideas?

I say a lot of dumb shit. I don't always make it clear that I'm kidding, and I don't usually care if you can tell. From the absolute beginning, Correspondences was the kind of band where somebody would say a dumb idea, somebody else would say something dumber, none of us would crack a smile, and then we'd do the most absurd version of the original idea. But it worked from the get-go. Emily talks about how, in her other bands, she always has to turn down her most self-indulgent ideas, but in Correspondences, we lean into them as hard as we can.

We started practicing at Lee's house, Baberham on Lincoln Street. Lee was working as a baker so from the first practice we had pastries and snacks, which, let me tell you, if your band doesn't prioritize treats during band practice, fuck your band. It was awesome. She's also always been an herbalist so she had this epic, overflowing cabinet of tinctures and herbs and stuff, as well as the kind of plants and sunlight and sweet roommates that light up a collective house from the inside. Y'know how sometimes you go to a place where a

bunch of people live and you're like man, it feels good here? It was like that.

My last band had never actually properly recorded anything, so I bossed everybody into recording the first practice and then into releasing it as a demo on bandcamp. It's still up there, the *Baba Yaga* demo. They're long, rambling bass, drums, and cello pieces and they're awesome. I think we made two of 'em up on the spot and one was based on a slow two-chord arpeggio thing which, to this day, despite having played it a million times in practice and at shows, I am unable to play properly. I made it up! I wrote it but I don't know how to count it. Apparently I switch between playing it in 4/4 and 7/8 or something, unpredictably, without being aware that I'm doing it. But you know what? Who cares. Because, relevantly, I also bossed Lee and Emily into this idea that the worst thing about music is all the counting and rather than counting to four all the time we should reject patriarchal hegemony by playing parts of songs over and over until somebody decides to go to the next part and communicates it by exchanging meaningful looks. I am kind of incompetent at music. It doesn't fucking matter! Our band was incredible immediately. That demo is long and aimless but it's also awesome and I can still listen to it.

We fell into our roles in the band immediately, too. I didn't need to be able to count music right because I'm the enthusiastic one. Emily is the one who knows stuff about music. Lee is the band mom—she has pastries and herbs and a truck.

Weirdos and queers in Portland actually listened to our demo and liked it, which was wild. We kept writing songs and we got invited to play shows. I started playing guitar on one song, and at our first show—a basement in Portland with Falls of Rauros, an incredible Portland band—I hadn't made a plan for what to do with the bass when I switched to guitar, like to bring a stand or something, so I handed it to this guy Isaac, who just held it while I played guitar.

We played by candlelight wearing veils.

This is the most important thing about Correspondences: we are fucking stoked about each other and we are completely obsessed with our own band. We self-mythologize so fucking hard. I don't think it would have mattered if anybody cared about what we were doing, because mostly we're just stoked on each other. But people did care.

We kept having practices at Baberham where we gobbled up treats; we kept writing songs; Lee got a dog, who usually slept in front of the drums when we practiced; I kept borrowing people's amps, because the only bass amp I actually owned was a forty dollar piece of broken shit that I think I wrote about buying in one of my first *MRR* columns.

We did a split tape with this band Swaath, then toured with them. They ruled. They would bring fucking full stacks into basements. Ryan from Swaath let me borrow his amp for I think that whole tour—thanks Ryan. We earned the "playing more shows on a tour than there are days" merit badge by playing at Girls Rock Philly one afternoon on that tour—thanks Smoot. I think we played with HIRS that evening. We went from Portland down to Richmond, Virginia (where I saw a pikachu in the driveway after the show) and then back up to Burlington, where a couple of drunk heterosexuals on a roof called us "hairy leg wooks," which we had to look up on urban dictionary. We played some of the most primo basements in the northeast and we played with some of the most awesome bands, including the sorely missed Groke from Providence, who also let me borrow their bass amp at least one time. We also played the Space Gallery, the legit venue in Portland, a couple times, including opening for A Silver Mt. Zion for one show, which ruled because I know they're not really a *MRR* band but I did get to talk about *MRR*, radical doulas, and hating misogynists with Efrim Menuck before the show for a while, which was cool. Efrim Menuck rules.

Toward the end of 2011 it it happened that all of us were going to move out of Portland around the same time. I don't remember exactly what any of us were doing. I think Lee left to do herb school in Vermont? But at this point people in Portland knew us enough that we were like, I bet we could pull of a goodbye show.

We pulled it off as hell.

This Portland label, Eternal Otter, offered to do a tiny run of clear lathe-cut records for it, so we were like fuck it, go big or go home. We recruited I think nine friends and loved ones to be a ghost chorus, put up a bunch of burlap and electric moon phases, and did a "there's no such thing as a bad idea" farewell show. It ended up being packed! People gave a fuck as hell about our band, we sold way more copies of the record than were pressed (I think we probably owe a lot of people five or ten bucks or however much they cost, because there was no second run), people freaked out, and it was awesome. I mean, it wasn't really a music venue and I don't think the monitors were good so we probably sounded like shit, but who cares.

Then that was it.

But we didn't want it to be it.

I taught bass at Girls Rock Camp in Burlington from I think 2010 to 2015, and Lee taught drums for at least a couple of those years. We have talked about getting back together to play more shows consistently since that farewell show. We did manage to get back together to do a tour for a week at one point, I don't even remember which year now. 2014? 2015? It was only a week but it was with one of the best bands in the world, Ragana, who it turned out were also fans of our band. (Also one time another of the best bands in the world, Thou, who would go on to do a split with Ragana, name-checked us in an interview. That ruled too.) We played a show in Boston where we jumped on a trampoline in the yard outside the basement while Ragana played, and then they jumped on the trampoline while we did.

One morning I woke up half-dead on Emily's couch in Providence at the end of a week of touring and saw Maria from Ragana sitting on their tour truck's tailgate with a guitar, writing music in the sun.

New Year's Eve a couple months ago Emily invited me and Lee to a party at her house. We had initially hoped to play a brunch show in her living room on new year's day, but we didn't get it together. Word got out, though, and people were bummed when it didn't happen. We did make vague plans to get together and get proper recordings of all our songs this year, though, because all our recordings kind of sound like shit. We also got to self-mythologize. It is still really fun to hang out with those two, they're some of my favorite people in the world.

This thing also happened where I became a social worker three years ago, Lee started doing circles of accountability stuff with people leaving prison in the last year, and I just wrote a recommendation for Emily to go to social work school. Unrelated to each other, we sort of all ended up doing work to make the world less shitty.

But here's the thing. (And here's where it turns out that this isn't only a love letter to my band, but a love letter to *MRR* too.) Correspondences was a really important thing in my life for learning not to fucking hate everybody, in the same way that being involved in *MRR* has been. I mean, we all know that the sort of people who host and attend and perform at shows in basements by bands who have no intention or hope of blowing up are the best people. But before Correspondences, I didn't really know those people. I'd been reading *MRR* since high school and playing in bands that played mostly bars, with the occasional living room or back yard, since I started playing in bands. That shit is not a community. Doing a weird band without goals or plans beyond doing weird stuff that we liked opened me up to a world of queers and people who are somehow cool despite not being queer, who are and have been doing weird things, who will continue to do weird things. Freaks, nerds, romantics. The

best people. Correspondences—and the stuff that I got to because of Correspondences—restored my faith in people. There's something about being on tour in a pickup truck with two bandmates and a dog, hot and greasy, getting where you're going, constipated and exhausted, and meeting a fleet of entirely new people in a town or city you didn't know, who are stoked and kind and eager to connect. We all know how many assholes there are in the world, but this punk shit? At its core, it's about the fact that there are way more awesome people in the world than you ever imagined.

And that's gonna be true even after *MRR*.

ENDNOTES

1. I'm a couple hundred words over and, on re-reading this, I barely even gave you a sense of why I love Lee and Emily so much—what they're like. Just trust me, they're the best.
2. The world sucks right now, but as Rebecca Solnit has pointed out, hopelessness is a kind of fortune-telling, and you're not psychic. All the revolutions? All the good, big shit that people have accomplished in history, which from our position in the future seems to have been inevitable? Beforehand, it absolutely did not seem that way. People have been scared for the future before, and they did stuff. We don't know how this ends.
3. See you in hell, *Maximum*.

If I could see one band that isn't around anymore do one song live, it would be FUGAZI doing "Suggestion." It's one of those songs that blew my mind wide open the first time I heard it. I was in 7th grade, and read about it in a book on riot grrrl. It's got that weird blend of funk and punk rock that's always had a special place in my heart. It swings between a tight, bass-driven groove and an off the wall, burn-your-house-down chorus. But by far the most interesting thing about "Suggestion" is that it's a song about sexual assault, written by a man, from the perspective of a woman.

There are two other times that I can think of this happening. They are "Rape Me" by NIRVANA and "She" by GREEN DAY. (Yeah, I *am* gonna write about them in *MRR*, you ice cream eating motherfucker.) As far as I know, there wasn't much outrage when GREEN DAY did it in 1994. When NIRVANA did "Rape Me" in 1993, the controversy mostly came from places like MTV, or suspiciously defensive dudes who insisted that the song was actually about the media. But 1988's "Suggestion" sparked a ton of outcry within the DIY punk rock community itself. Of course, the bros that wanted to get drunk and beat people up to Minor Threat hated it, but what else is new. What I find more interesting is that a large number of riot grrrls protested the song. People like Kathleen Hanna, who had been saying that sexism affects men for years, were against this song. So, is it okay for men to sing songs about rape from the point of view of women?

I think it is. That goes double for a song as well done as any of the one's listed above, and triple for "Suggestion" because the of the way they performed it live. Ian MacKaye wrote it for his friend Amy Pickering, who played in FIRE PARTY, coined the phrase "Revolution Summer," and was a victim of sexual assault. In some of the best live performances of "Suggestion" I've seen, she sings the first half of the song with FUGAZI. There's indescribable power in the way she and the crowd and the band go off in unison. In a 1988 show at the Wilson Center, after Pickering leaves the stage, MacKaye goes on on the one of the rants he's so (in)famous for. "You *do not* beat up people for being gay," he declares. The crowd roars. "You *do not* beat up people for being black. You *do not* beat up people for being women. You *do not* beat up people… period! Usually this song is a song about rape, but tonight it's a song about beating up gay men at the park." And from there, the band launches into the second half of the song.

Really, that's the thing that makes "Suggestion" such a powerful song. The moment it was written, it was a song about a girl who gets attacked by a man. But once you put art out there for the world to see and hear, it tends to take on a life of its own. "Suggestion" becomes a song about the experiences of the listener, about how 1 in 6 American women are rape victims, about what it takes for a man to prove he is a man. On any given night, it might be song about gay people or people of color getting beat up at the park, or at school, or on the highway. Ultimately, "Suggestion" is a song about breaking out of the role you've been assigned, whether it's one of fear or of beating people up or of staying quiet. We are all guilty, but we've also all got the power and the responsibility to change the way we think and act.

As always, you can reach me at carmenservon@gmail.com. Hit me up with your nerdy FUGAZI facts, or your art and music, or to tell me you think GREEN DAY are sell-out scum.

I first encountered the *Maximum Rocknroll* magazine in my teenage years, where copy after copy of new issues and back issues were stacked in the now long gone Repoman Records. I visited regularly after school, scrolling through the records and carefully picking something worth the modest paycheck from my job at the local supermarket. I remember wanting so badly to expand my punk knowledge and fit in with the, in my eyes then, way cooler crowd and their obscure band t-shirts and talk of bands and gigs of the past. Flipping through the *MRR* issues, I realized that I hardly knew any of the band names printed on the covers and picked out a few back issues that featured the big local bands of the mid-2000 K-town scene. I remember feeling embarrassed to be pretentious enough to read a zine where I hardly knew the bands interviewed and had hardly heard of the supposedly legendary US cities that some of those bands originated from. So, I kept to reading the locally based zines that were floating around in the city as the punk scene grew in post-Ungdomshuset eviction days in Denmark.

Flash forward to 2016, and I'm in the backseat of a way-too-air-conditioned car in Malaysian Borneo, somewhere in the countryside hours from our origin of the town of Kota Kinabalu. Hafiez is in the driver's seat playing tracks from this year's hottest US bands. While ping-pong'ing band names that we've read about in *MRR* with the rest of the Kota Kinabalu gang and me and Alex, two slightly sunburnt Scandinavians. You can't deny that even in the internet era, *MRR* has had a huge international impact and created an international connection.

It's part fascinating and part scary that a magazine based in one part of the world has such an impact on the international punk scene, in terms of what's chosen to be printed or not, who checks off enough of the right marks to be featured on the cover, and the sometimes questionable reviews printed in the magazine. Yes, there are a few handfuls of international contributors such as myself,

but the main editorial choices are made by those, no doubt dedicated and hardworking, contributors based in the geographical area around the *MRR* house.

A DIY media such as *MRR* is dependent on the labor of the volunteer workers and contributors as well as the support, material and spiritual, from its readers and listeners. There's no doubt that *MRR* has received a lot of critique lately, about the editorial choices and of course about the decision to end the printed monthly magazine. And just the recent editorial and ideologist choices are the elephant in the room, which I will now address. In fact, there is no doubt that those choices have made it harder for a good portion of the readers to relate to the content of the magazine. I love the magazine and still at least scroll through the pages of the content that I find irrelevant or dull to me, but I have to agree with the criticism that's being voiced. The editorial changes were imposed without much further explanation to the reader and it feels like interview questions such as "how do you feel about being an all cis male band?" have slipped into the magazine, without introducing the readers to the reasons behind it. I admire that *MRR* is trying to include artists and people from different backgrounds, challenging male dominance and actively displaying the diversity in punk. But, if you fail to explain what methods you use, how and why, the effort will be pointless as it'll fly right over the heads of those readers, who like teenage me are not in a certain loop or do not have the same ideologist focus as the current US West Coast scene surrounding the *MRR* house.

The mainstream media is reporting that the internet is killing this and that, and millenials like me are killing yet another industry. While those claims are often doubtful, I can't deny that I see tendencies of punx dropping printed media over the digital medias, especially the mainstream social medias. There are so many alternatives out there in cyberspace, with a convenient portal in your pocket, that makes it easy to say drop a printed magazine if you don't agree with or understand the editorial choices.

I'm of course curious to see what *MRR* will bring us on the website based media. I will still insist that bringing reviews and interviews online *is not the same* as a physical printed magazine. A website gives you the choice to click on a certain article/section—or not. A choice that we make hundreds of times every day in the media buffet that the internet holds. With a printed magazine, you have to at least scroll through those pages you're not interesting in, with the possibility of a photo, a phrase or name catching your attention and drawing you to read the article anyway. And the myth is that physical things disappear while anything on the internet lives in the cloud forever is false. I bet most of you keep old zines in your house, as punx truly are a nostalgic bunch with hoarding behavioral patterns, and pick some of them to read from time to time. While not a single person has scrolled through a website to re-read a collection of articles published a decade ago on a slow Saturday afternoon.

In a digital age where every punk (no overstatement) has access to a world of media in their pocket, it's tough and critical for a printed magazine to lose support from readers and contributors. So, this closes the chapter of *MRR* as a monthly printed zine. Whether you agree with the direction the magazine has taken in the past years or not, this is a huge loss for the DIY punk scene, that's losing a way to connect, learn, and spread knowledge. Long live the printed *Maximum Rocknroll* magazine.

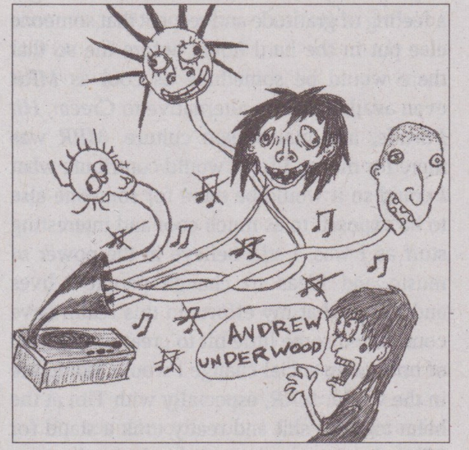
Like many people I was shocked to read that *MRR* was ceasing publication. As a columnist I am not involved in any of the decision-making nor was I even aware that such measures where necessary or being contemplated. I am sad to see this happen and I feel like some effort probably could have been made to preserve *MRR* as a publication, my thought being that it is easier to see it through some hard times then to restart it in the future in the event that DIY hardcore punk makes a comeback. However, the choices were not mine to make and I didn't have any of the information.

When I started this column much of the issues I addressed where my dismay at the shape of the scene in the mid-'90s and how far it had come from its early '80s ideals and values. But now I am back to where I started, feeling like a stranger in a strange land looking around me at the form the scene has assumed in the age of the internet. My first draft of this column was filled with bitterness and dismay at the end of *MRR* as a print zine. After talking to my wife and thinking about it more I realize that is the wrong approach. Instead, this column is going to be about gratitude, positivity, and inspiration. I have been a regular columnist in this magazine since Tim invited me back in the mid-'90s. It is hard to believe that back then *MRR* had a months long backlog for ad space due to the high demand for ads. Indeed, people's frustration with *MRR* having some kind of monopoly on opinion spawned several other zines such as *Hit List* and *Punk Planet* which were supposed to offer some sort of alternative point of view but did not last nearly as long. Those days are long gone now. Times change, technology changes, points of view and people change.

I have stayed at *MRR* this long for several reasons. Foremost is simply my passion for punk, hardcore, and records. I am still as excited about this music today as I was when I first brought home a Government Issue 7" as a high school freshman. I have been reading *MRR* since about issue number seven. I used to listen to the radio show every week as a teenager in high school and try to cross reference the bands with the ads and reviews to track down records. I met many pen pals and friends through the old classified section. And in a roundabout way I met my wife through my *MRR* column. In the days before the internet I photocopied all of the scumpit articles and stapled them together in a notebook as a reference for rare records. In addition to my column I authored a half-dozen scene reports and interviewed several bands. *MRR* zine and radio played a very important part in exposing me to international hardcore punk culture and radical left-wing political ideas. People my age will understand exactly what I'm talking about, and for the younger generation that grew up with the internet just imagine not having the internet and having something like *MRR* are being your only access to this kind of information, it was a lifeline to many thousands of alienated bored suburban kids who did not fit in. Therefore, an important reason I have stuck around so long is a feeling of gratitude and respect that someone else put in the hard hours before me so that there would be something as cool as *MRR* even available as an alternative to *Creem, Hit Parade*, and mainstream culture. *MRR* was there for me, so I felt I would contribute what I could so it would be there for someone else to be exposed to as much cool and interesting stuff as I was. I still believe in the power of music and ideas to change people's lives and I hope that my efforts in this realm have contributed some little bit to creating the kind of bottom up social change I would like to see in the world. *MRR*, especially with Tim at the helm took no shit and really took a stand for DIY subculture against any kind of rock music business bullshit. Said bullshit is in danger of swamping subculture today as we hand over more and more of our scene to giant tech companies. My greatest concern is that letting the zines and labels die off is putting too much control in the hands of tech companies, this would have been hotly debated in the letters and columns of the *MRR* of old, and perhaps it

is being debated on some platform. But after this month, you won't be reading about it here.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for buying and reading *MRR* all these years. I would like to thank all of the contributors, shitworkers, coordinators, editors and advertisers who have made it happen month after month. I would like to think that I am a more mature, stronger, and more positive person these days than I was when I started writing this column or, even a few years ago. As a result I would like to apologize to those I might have shit talked, offended, or pissed off, with the possible exception of Ben Weasel who I still think is a douche. I have strong opinions, but a diversity of opinions is necessary and I hope no one took anything I wrote in this column too personally or let some dumb shit I said without thinking through get under their skin. I started this column over 20 years ago from a place of anger and negativity. These days there is as much, or more to be outraged about as there was back in the '80s and '90s, but I feel more than ever the need to channel that energy into positive change. Creating a DIY subculture was a feat for the generation that got the scene off the ground in late '70s and early '80s, let's not fuck it up just because technology and market forces eliminated our "punk bible." As for me, my flame still burns, I'm not on social media, but you can find me lingering in the back at the hardcore show or behind the counter at the record store, or carrying a box of LP mailers to the post office. No one really needs old white guys like me telling them about how great it was back in 1984, so I am happy to recede into the background and let younger people try to outdo my generation with whatever it is that comes next.



Might was well start by addressing the biggest news of the year: my five year old son Montgomery wants it to be known in no uncertain terms that the BUZZCOCKS are his favorite band and that "What Do I Get" is the best song ever written. So now y'all know.

In terms of that other thing that's happening I have no interest in eulogizing or autopsying the print edition of *Maximum Rocknroll* or its legacy, so I won't. It's been a right privilege to have worked with the print edition of *MRR* for the last decade-plus and it'll be a right goddamn privilege to work with *MRR* from here on out, newsprint be damned. Hell, I bet moving online will double my readership. That's right, as many as ten people might be reading this column on a monthly basis in the future!

The good news is that we've got an all-time great lineup of records to go out on. I predicted that the TITS LP would be top ten of the year worthy and holy shit the band sure didn't let me down. The 悦楽患者 LP is absolutely ferocious, a snarling, swaggering assault that drinks deeply from the font of Indignation-era CONFUSE. There are some brief guitar solos and some moments of near blast-beating on the part of the drummer but for the most part this is for all its heaviness an intensely punk record. It's difficult to even articulate just how completely on point this band is, from their immaculate sound to the songwriting to the aesthetic…incredible. To take so much inspiration from such a specific scene/handful of bands and to still produce fresh-sounding and interesting material is an incredible feat of artistry. In a hundred years noisecore weirdoes will have put this record right into the pantheon alongside The Very Best of Hero and Nuclear Addicts. Another triumph in a long string of recent hits for Pogo 77.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Japan or possibly on another planet and/or dimension, STAGNATION seem to have completely fuckin' lost it. The brand new *!!!* EP on Hardcore Survives is yet another evolution of the STAGNATION sound, with a strongly improvisational feel, driven by frantic drumming and effects distorted spoke-sung vocals. The bass playing is as brilliant as ever, a clean and mostly straightforward counterbalance to the shrieking and squalling guitar noise. At some points, various hand-held percussion instruments lurk in the background of the recording (did I hear a triangle at one point?), at others the spacey effects and languorous pace recall live HAWKWIND at their most tripped-out. An entire LP of this kind of stuff would be absolutely wonderful, it's strange, aggressive, disorienting and completely fascinating. STAGNATION are a very special band, we're lucky to have them around. Please note that there isn't a single word on the packaging of this record except for the faintest hint of the band's name in the graffiti-inspired cover art, look for the weirdest looking collage cover in your best-stocked record store's "S" section and you might just find it.

Speaking of packaging, the new MALIMPLIKI record is just goddamn adorable! A laughing troll graces the cover, flanked by a smiling flower and a cute frog and the included poster/insert features a zoo's worth of cheerful cartoon animals. I assume they're all so happy because one of Japan's most ferocious underground bands finally have a record that'll be relatively easy to get a hold of! This is completely crushing, adding a bit of a MOB 47 speed to their previous TOTALITÄR influenced sound. Five tracks in total, three high-speed crushers, one more mid-tempo grinder, closing with the whistle-driven rocker "Minimuma Kultura Vivo" all sung in Esperanto, the international language of peace. I very much hope that this new record is well-distributed by Hardcore Survives and is able to get into the hands of punx around the world because MALIMPLIKI are a fucking great band, picking up the gauntlet laid down by previous all-female Japanese extreme bands like DEFUSE, CRUSADE, and the GAIA and running with it.

Thanks to excellent distribution by Doomed to Extinction Records, there is already a fair amount of excitement around the new DEFORMED EXISTENCE *Hate With Patriotism* demo cassette. As well there should be because it's a fucking ripper. The aesthetic and style are very much of a piece with '90s crust punk, from AUS ROTTEN and REACT to Swedish crust ala early DISFEAR and DRILLER KILLER with a few nods to Japanese crust gods ACID and the almighty DOOM as well. The sound is huge for a three piece (though the guitar is a bit buried in the mix) with clear barked vocals and super hard-hitting drumming. It's such a breath of fresh air to hear good, classic-sounding crust with explicitly political lyrics and a genuine approach. This band is good now and I can see them approaching greatness as they carry on.

Let's close out with a very important reissue. It seems impossible from a Western punk perspective that a 1997 punk release could be considered revolutionary or pioneering but that's exactly what the BOLLOCKS *Revolution* cassette was to the Malaysian punk scene. Its influence is clearly laid out in the excellent insert to Glord Records' LP reissue of the original cassette, featuring remembrances of the original record's influence from a ton of local punx and an interview about the history surrounding the recording, release and distribution of *Revolution* with bassist Adik. The record itself is fuckin' fantastic, careening from melodic streetpunk to metallic hardcore, all retaining the rough-and-ready recording and replay sound of the original cassette. This is 100% freedom music, mostly focused on building up the punk scene and tearing down the institutions that oppress the people.

There's even one song, sung in Malay that decries the (then) war in Bosnia and declares solidarity with the innocent victims of that conflict. The Southeast Asian punk scene is finally getting some long overdue attention in the West with some crucial reissues of classic records by Filipino bands, I hope that Glord Records and others will be able to do the same for classic Malay punk as well. It bears mentioning that besides the fantastic insert, the rest of this record's packaging is great as well, with a heavy-duty gatefold reproducing the original art and lyrics (with new annotations!) and a 180-gram LP on clear with black splatters. This pressing is limited to 300 copies, I implore you to track one down ASAP!

Safer Sex Work

Last April, the US government signed two federal acts into law: the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA). These laws are intended to help stop sex trafficking by shutting down websites where people can advertise and solicit sex, but the unintended (or intended?) consequences are disastrous for people who conduct consensual sex work, which is the overwhelming majority of people in the sex industry. Harm reduction doesn't just apply to substance use, there are lots of harm reduction measures that have been used by sex workers for damn near centuries. In recent times, the internet has played a major role in reducing harm while exchanging sex.

When Backpage, Craigslist personals, Fetlife, Eros, and other pages got shut down last year, it devastated the community. So many of the safety measures and income streams that people had created over the years were obliterated overnight. And the impact is much worse for communities that are already at much higher risk for violence, murder, stigma, and financial insecurity than other sex workers with relatively more privilege and safety nets.

When asked by *Newsweek* about her reactions to the new laws, an unidentified sex worker states, "[I'm] devastated and terrified because people are going to die. I know that sounds blunt and maybe a little alarmist, but it's not. The most marginalized of us are going to die. Trans people, people of color, poorer people are going to die. I'm a sex worker as a last resort...The people who have the privilege of stepping away from doing sex work are doing that, and the people who have no choice are banding together and figuring out new strategies, even financially supporting each other."

The internet allowed sex workers to cut predatory or violent pimps out of their lives by providing a forum to find their own clients. Using websites like Backpage, people were able screen their clients by verifying their identity, sometimes by getting multiple forms of legal identification. The internet facilitated sex workers to share referrals with one another, contribute to bad date reports, and even weed out potentially dangerous clients by creating email intake forms.

The Red Umbrella Project is a sex worker advocacy organization based out of New York. In 2015, they coupled with the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Best Practice Policy Project to publish a report called, *Meaningful Work: Transgender Experience in the Sex Trade.* I reached out to get a quote from one of the authors of the report, Darby Hickey, who also happens to be a friend I know from back when I lived in DC. Darby is a self-described aging punk, former sex worker, and legislative staffer to a DC Councilmember. Here's what she has to say about her personal experience working on the report"

"I think Meaningful Work was an important analysis of data because policy makers and the public put such stock in research reports like it, and there is a serious lack of such publications (or the underlying data) in the U.S. context. Those of us who have engaged in commercial sex, or are close to it somehow, know firsthand about the rights abuses that happen, but for a stigmatized community to be heard you need data to back up those stories. Even that isn't good enough often. Meaningful Work came a number of years after another project I worked on with a team of community-based researchers (i.e. people from the community that was the target of the research) called Move Along which was about the experiences of people policed under prostitution laws. That effort came at a time of terrible new policies in D.C. regarding sex work, including 'prostitution free zones.' We unsuccessfully fought that legislation but after it passed we decided to document things, and now, over a decade later, we are in a very different situation—rather than more terrible policies being heaped on sex workers and related communities, there are serious conversations about decriminalization of sex work. For my part, rather than protesting Councilmembers, I now work for one, and harm reduction deeply influences my approach to 'working on the inside.' I feel very lucky to have written the law that repealed the 'prostitution free zones' and to have helped move the conversation forward, but I also recognize the limits of what I'm able to do. Harm continues to flow from the law and the state, but I try to reduce it."

The Meaningful Work analysis found that approximately 11% of transmasculine and transfeminine people had conducted sex work at one point in their lives, a much higher percentage than the general population. They also found that almost half of the Black trans individuals represented in the survey had participated in sex work and earned significantly less than their white cis counterparts. Latinx workers are also at a much higher risk of violence, and undocumented people could be deported if they are arrested for solicitation or other "crimes."

Sex workers who earn less are limited in their ability to turn away clients who set off alarms for them, and experience more violence, trauma, and are even at higher risk of homicide as a result. The overrepresentation of trans people in sex work, specifically Black trans sex workers, speaks to their experiences with workplace discrimination, discriminatory policing and sentencing, and having less access to capital compared to white, cis sex workers. The Meaningful Work report states that about half of Black and Black-multiracial respondents earned less than $10,000 a year, and less than 15% of them received public assistance. They also found that while only 16% of white sex workers had spent more than six months in jail or prison, 42% of POC sex workers had spent more than six months in jail or prison.

Speaking of incarceration, calling the police to make a report or to get help can make things much worse for a lot of people who engage in commercial sex, and the overwhelming majority of violent incidents are never reported to police. Cops all over the world are known to abuse people who exchange sex and often end up humiliating, arresting, assaulting, or stealing from sex workers. One in five respondents of the Meaningful Work study experienced police officers demanding sex in exchange for not being arrested or mistreated. HIPS, Another DC-based organization, surveyed 149 (mostly street-based) cis and trans women and found that 90% of respondents had experienced violence while working, but only one respondent indicated that she would go to a police officer if she got hurt while working.

One of the biggest blows to occupational

safety is the undermining of the market for commercial sex. While some people enjoy the work and do it by choice, many exchange sex because they don't have other options. So with their livelihood in jeopardy, many sex workers have had to go back to working the street.

Working on the street is much riskier than taking incalls. In 2008, The Office of Police Integrity in Victoria conducted a study in which they found that street-based sex workers were more likely to experience aggravated sexual assault, unlawful imprisonment, kidnapping, robbery and non-payment than non-street-based sex workers. A study out of Australia found that street-based workers were twice as likely to experience work-related violence, and were significantly more likely to report accepting alternative forms of payment, such as food or shelter, than non-street based workers. The authors state that this was a clear indication of the elevated levels of poverty and homelessness amongst street workers compared to other sex workers. Incidentally, studies also show an inverse correlation between income level and HIV prevalence among sex workers and a higher likelihood of developing chronic problematic substance use and mental health disorders.

Below are some tips I've compiled from sex workers and sex worker-based organizations such as The Red Umbrella project, St. James Infirmary, and the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition.

1. Screen your clients and get references whenever possible.
2. Negotiate and get the money up front. Keep a set price list and establish limits of what you will and won't do
3. Trust your gut and be aware of your surroundings.
4. Check your local bad date sheet and contribute to it.
5. Have a safe call—someone who expects to hear from you at predetermined times and who knows what to do if you use any of your established code words.
6. Use the kite-string website if you don't have a safe call. You can set it to call your emergency contacts if you don't respond to a text after the amount of time of your choosing: kitestring.io
7. Enable your phone to allow your friends to track you on GPS.
8. Keep the money your date gives you separate from the rest of your money so if you do get robbed they may not take your whole bankroll.
9. Always check in with, or pretend to check in with someone once you get into a room or before you get into a car. Make sure your client sees you waving at someone and saying that you will be back in amount of time. If you're inside, call your safe call in front of the client so they know that someone is expecting to hear from you at a certain time.
10. Carry a personal alarm that can make a lot of noise if someone is attacking you
11. If you are working out of a car, try and keep one of the doors slightly ajar. Try not to wear clothing or jewelry that could get caught on something, ripped out, or pulled.
12. Put a little bit of menthol solve in your nose in case your client smells bad.
13. Be wary of putting yourself in sexual positions which limit your mobility
14. Carry more condoms, lube, and wipes than you think you might need. Bring candy and chapstick so your mouth doesn't get dry
15. If a client is unwilling to use a condom, here are some options.
    - Say fuck that and get out.
    - Use lots of water or silicone-based lube, it helps to reduce friction, which will reduce your risk of catching an STI or HIV.
    - Cheek a condom while giving head (google it).
    - Put in an internal condom before seeing them. You can put it in and leave it there for several hours before having sex. See if your client is willing to continue with internal condoms. If you are using them without telling him, know that these can be noisy and that a client might pick up on it.
16. Always know how many passengers are in a car. Check to make sure there is no one else hiding in the car when you get in.
17. Use a condom over your sex toys and wash them with soap and water after each use.
18. Try never to take drugs from a John. If you're using, bring your own drugs, syringes, all your works, and pipes.
19. Stay hydrated!

I know I sound like a broken record but I don't care. Stigma breeds violence and hurts literally everyone. Legalizing sex work and drug use would alleviate so many of the risks that are currently inherent within them, but don't need to be. Prohibition never fucking works. <3 dearauntiehazel@gmail.com

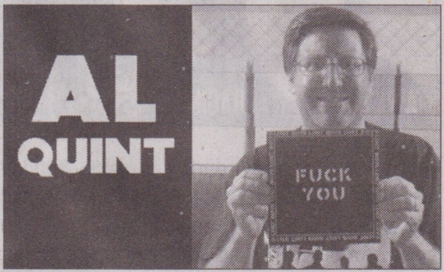
This is my last ever column for *MRR* in a print manifestation; the first column that I wrote for was in the July 2015 issue, which means that I've been doing this for almost exactly four years now. I had absolutely zero aspirations to be a columnist, and it's honestly not something that ever crossed my mind for even a moment before I actually signed up for it. When Grace was still the content coordinator and she had reached out to me to see if I'd have any interest in doing a music column focused on post-punk and weirdo DIY sounds past and present that might not be getting much or any attention elsewhere in the magazine, it really caught me off-guard. Why would anyone bother to read what I had to say about music? Why not leave it to someone who presents as way more "punk" than I feel like I do? Ever since the announcement that *MRR* was going to cease to exist as a monthly magazine, I've heard really similar lines of thought from so many people when recounting their feelings of inadequacy when it came to getting involved at *MRR* (or in DIY punk in general, for that matter). And not surprisingly, hardly any of those people were straight, white cis-men. We're conditioned to doubt ourselves, to discount or minimize our knowledge and abilities, to constantly measure ourselves up against arbitrary external standards. I've literally been an active participant in DIY punk for half of my life, but I'm constantly struggling with the feeling that I'm still trying to catch up somehow.

Long story short, being asked to do this column was one of the first times that I ever truly felt like all of my years of researching, obsessing over, and advocating for off-kilter genius underground music were seen as being credible and valuable, and I feel so fortunate to have been given this platform—it's something that I took extremely seriously, to the point of giving myself anxiety attacks while trying to articulate my thoughts for this column every month. In my weird archivist mind, the significance of proper documentation is so paramount, and there were so many bands and recordings that I wanted to pull out from the margins and include in my allotted 2000

words per issue, whether it was a group of punk women who recorded one single in 1981 and then immediately disbanded, or small-town modern art-punk freaks uploading their demos to Bandcamp in 2019.

It's easy to forget in an increasingly screen-oriented world, but there's a certain inherent impermanence to born-digital content, and contrary to what some people might argue, you really can't find "everything" online. I think about the stacks of fanzines from the 1980s that I've collected, with the laid-out-by-hand ads for micro-labels that might have only ever released a tape compilation or two, photos of bands who played a handful of shows but never made any proper recordings, or reviews of albums that still haven't been uploaded to Youtube or chronicled on someone's minimal synth blog. All of these things live on through those printed pages, and often *only* through those printed pages. This magazine has existed for nearly four decades, and the significance of that longevity and legacy can't be understated. I've loved being able to contribute to the documentation of all sorts of wild sounds that might otherwise be lost to time, knowing that by creating a permanent record in print, they would be preserved as a part of punk history as reflected in *MRR*, and one that could still be referenced years down the line. I took this column on as a challenge to myself, to throw myself into something that was overwhelming and outside of my comfort zone in a lot of ways, and battling all of my frustration and self-doubt in the process has been more than worth it to have had this outlet to shout out even just a fraction of the people on the fringes of punk and DIY who I feel deserve more than that.

I'm not exactly sure what's next for *MRR* or how I might fit into that, but let's keep in touch, okay? Email is ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, sights and sounds are at futuresandpasts.org.



LET'S NOT SAY GOODBYE… LET'S JUST SAY SO LONG FOR NOW…

Imagine you're riding up a roller coaster. Slowly you ascend to the top. The intensity level builds, then over the pinnacle you go, plummeting downward, feeling as though the car is going to go off the track or completely out of control…"

Those were the first words I ever wrote for *Maximum Rocknroll*, in issue No. 15 (July '84) and it was for a piece on the legendary (not a word I use lightly) Massachusetts band SIEGE. I'd met and interviewed the band a few months earlier and they asked me to write an intro of sorts. I'd been reading the zine since the beginning. I can't recall if writing for them had crossed my mind up to that point. I wanted to write something that captured the feeling I had the first time I saw them play. Maybe the writing was a tad pretentious but I wanted it to stand out more than *"Siege are a fast hardcore punk band from Weymouth, MA."* And it got my foot in the proverbial door, as I soon began contributing the Boston scene reports on a fairly frequent basis, as well as pieces on such bands as Rhode Island's VICIOUS CIRCLE and Bostonians SORRY. Speaking of the latter, check them out if you never have—their second album *The Way it Is* is one of the most overlooked discs of the 1980s. I was flattered when the coordinator at the time, who I knew from his old band, asked me to come on board as a columnist in 2005. I think I've only missed a handful of them over the past 14 or so years and that was mainly due to family emergencies. I wanted to make sure I got at least *something* published every month, while I was slacking on my own zine/blog—which I still am, but that's another story.

I wrote that SIEGE piece at a time when punk became a way of life for me, so to speak, or at least an escape from a dreary day-to-day existence, spending eight hours a day working at a job I hated, in a bank. Putting on that fucking shirt and tie every day and, at that time, working in a windowless office with co-workers' whose chain smoking rivaled the cast of *Mad Men*.

At least there were a few fringe benefits. When I worked in that office (the loan department), I'd open the envelopes with the loan payments and there would be at least a few uncanceled stamps. There was a xerox machine nearby so when I had the office to myself or at least the boss was away, I could make copies of flyers for my penpals all over the world. They probably figured I wasn't too into the job because I eventually got demoted back to teller.

Even before I wrote the SIEGE article, I was already making contacts through the scene reports and classified ads. The high point of the day would be going home from work and seeing what treasures waited by the mailbox, then excitedly carrying them up the stairs to my one room studio apartment and immediately putting a record on the turntable and clearing away any residual misery from the last several hours. I can't stress enough how important that was and how it kept me more or less sane.

It's really sad to see the decline of print publications. I used to get a fair number of zines in the mail but that's pretty much dried up to nothing. And more publications are going online or offering either print or digital versions. It's understandable, because mailing and printing costs have become astronomical. So I have to give respect to individuals who still crank out print publications. Welly has kept his *Artcore* print zine going since 1986. German zine *Trust* started in 1986 and is up to almost 200 issues, printing on a bi-monthly basis. Jack Rabid (an early *MRR* columnist) still publishes *The Big Takeover.* I don't like about 95% of the music he covers but he knows his shit and I admire his dedication. I discovered some favorite bands through his writing, especially LEATHERFACE. He was an early champion of that band and right on the money.

I also have to give a tip of the hat to *Razorcake*, who continue to produce a quality read every other month, filled with interviews of punk musicians from the past and present. I have a huge pile I haven't read yet because, to be honest, it's tough to find the time. Story of my life—books, records, magazines—I have a backlog of all of them. Once in awhile, I'll open one and read an interview or two. I'll think maybe it's time to throw them out because there's little chance I'll ever catch up but it's hard to do. A lot of effort went into those publications and the people at *Razorcake*, most of whom are lifers (some of them got their start with *Flipside* or wrote for this esteemed publication back in the '80s and '90s), have always been supportive of my writing over the years and you can tell they're doing it for the right reasons. They're not cutting and pasting press releases and passing it off as music journalism or doing "premieres" on their websites. They're not acting as an arm of a music or publicity company.

And, man, there's some *wretched* music writing out there these days. To be honest, there's *always* been bad music writing. There aren't a whole lot of Lester Bangs or Mick Farrens out there anymore. If you don't know who I'm talking about, look it up. Or read my column because I've shamelessly stolen from both over the years (shhhhh).

The terrible writing not only applies to reviews but also for press releases. Someone must have sold or given my name to dozens of publicists because my email inbox is clogged day after day with solicitations for music that is far outside of my scope of coverage. We're talking hip-hop, Americana, folk, dance music, etc. Once in awhile, I'll write back and ask them if they've actually seen my blog, read my columns or listened to my radio show. There are a few who are at least in the same ballpark—companies that feature some punk, metal, industrial and so-on. I'll occasionally

bite and find good music for the radio show. Of course, these are "digital" promos, which I still generally won't review.

Speaking of cutting and pasting, one way I've been amusing myself and others lately is posting passages from some of the most ridiculous press releases that come through the inbox on my Facebook page. These reek of pretentious drivel that usually amounts to impenetrable word salad and leaves you scratching your head wondering what they fuck it is they're talking about? I know the SIEGE piece I wrote in 1984 is also hyperbolic and my reviewing has been criticized as "useless" by a few people but, as I said a few columns ago, you can't please everyone.

Anyway, this release, received from a PR firm a few months ago and originally published by the band in question's record label, pretty much takes the cake. The introductory paragraph says they're a blackened hardcore outfit. But then it goes on to say: *"While lyrically ruminating in the abstract emptiness of an impervious void and grappling with paradoxical duality, the auditory gloom of (album title) conjures sorrowing burial strings that furiously discharge into an onslaught of punishing resonance wrought with crushing despair, depression, and scavenging hopelessness."*

Shall I continue? *"Pummeling blasts and D-beats pound into peripherally orbiting shadows of the pixelated black, beneath the pulverizing density of nihilistic bass distortion in a mournful offering of somber funeral strains; the digested celestial nothingness of the eaten, frozen in dimensions of cyclical nooses and gnawing bacterial ether. Conceived incarnations of sorrowful mists from the harvest, bereaving the morbid light in which we suffer."*

I think they could have saved time by just saying they're a blackened hardcore outfit. I might have added they mixed hardcore, death metal and crust into a gloomy concoction. There you go. In fact, it's not really that bad. The songs are on the long side—the shortest one is still nearly five minutes long—but I could see some of you who like the heavier stuff enjoying this (I'll spill it—the album is *Lament* and the band is TOTALED). I might have written a bit more but I think it conveys things effectively. There's really no sense in being as verbose as the author of the press release since I don't get paid by the word. Hell, I don't get paid anything.

There were some funny responses to it in the thread on my page. One individual said it looked like something from *Mad Libs: Metal Edition*. Someone else succinctly called it "word diarrhea." Rick Sims, from the late great DIDJITS, opined, "Whatever happened to 'It's got a good beat and you can dance to it??'" If you don't get the reference, Google "Dick Clark good beat" and you'll find out. While you're at it, go on YouTube and type in "American Bandstand PIL." That was one of the more surreal appearances on Clark's long-running show. After that, look for YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA's appearance on "Soul Train," where they do a very cool cover of ARCHIE BELL & THE DRELLS' "Tighten Up." Seeing a very confused Don Cornelius interview them is pretty humorous. He asks YMO's drummer/vocalist Yuki Takahashi about influences. Yuki mentions KRAFTWERK and asks Don if he knows them. Don goes, "Of course. Hey, this is Big Don here, brother!" but then he admits he's not familiar with the record.

Music criticism is rife with trite phrases, tropes, clichés and so on. Michael Azerrad is the author of the 2001 book *Our Band Could Be Your Life—Scenes from the American Underground 1981-1991*. I've only read it once and that was when I got it but it was more or less an overview for people who generally think nothing happened musically between the SEX PISTOLS and NIRVANA. The chapters center around individual bands and covers the "big names" of the '80s era, like BLACK FLAG, MINOR THREAT, MINUTEMEN, HÜSKER DÜ, MISSION OF BURMA, SONIC YOUTH, and BUTTHOLE SURFERS. It gives a somewhat adequate overview of what happened then. *MRR* is mentioned and the bibliography includes a number of underground publications, including yours truly's. But it doesn't go *too* far underground. DIY is only given a passing mention and not always in a positive fashion. And it's criminal that a band as important as the WIPERS doesn't garner any attention at all.

In recent years, Azerrad has a Twitter account called @RockCriticLaw, which basically pokes fun at music critic crutches and clichés—overused expressions like "seminal," "criminally underrated" or "angular." Writing things like, "Quickly strummed guitar chords with a lot of distortion *must* be compared to a buzzsaw" or that a singer with a raspy voice has been "gargling with broken glass." Those tweets have been collected into a book called *Rock Critic Law: 101 Unbreakable Rules for Writing Badly About Music*. It's Azerrad's first since *Our Band Could Be Your Life*. It's a fast, funny read and it also strikes *very* close to home because I'm guilty of using many of those expressions and phrases. I've called drummers "sticksmen" and referred to second albums as "sophomore efforts." However, I have *never* used the term seminal in any column or blog I've done in this century. And I've only used "visceral," a word that someone once said I use too often, 15 or 20 times in the past 14 or 15 years. Once a year? Not too bad, I say.

Azerrad's not completely innocent, either. In a *Slate* magazine article, Matthew Kassel decided to investigate Azerrad's books to see if he'd "obeyed" his own laws and Kassel finds that he's disobeyed about 18 of them—saying that undistorted guitars are "chiming" or "ringing" or "jangling," saying a vocalist is "prowling" across a stage" or a bass player is the only musician who can be "nimble." He got busted for those and I've used them as well. I use "post-punk" as a common description and say those bands are spiky, angular or arty quite frequently. In fact, the number is probably a lot higher for me than Azerrad. I didn't count how many because, well, it'd be too embarrassing. My only defense is, after 35+ years of writing about music that's usually in a limited stylistic ballpark, at least in the grand musical scheme of things (another cliché! Ah-HA! You're so busted, Al), it's sometimes tough to come up with new and creative ways to say things and not descend into the maelstrom of pretentiousness (Oops… I did it *again*!).

I'd better quit while I'm still ahead. Thanks to everyone I've worked with at *MRR*, both past and present, even those I've had the (very) infrequent disagreement or difference of opinion with. And I hope that I'll be able to continue contributing online.

If anyone wants to get in touch, my contact info/web pages remain the same: Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, sonicoverload.net and subvox.blogspot.com

This column and every project I've ever done or will do are in loving memory of Jane Simpkin (1965–2001) and Chelle LaBarge (1966–2015)

A few weeks ago, during a lazy Sunday afternoon, a woman rang my bell and asked my opinion on the point of life. I cut the conversation short and told her I would not join whatever cult she was recruiting for. A few hours later I was wondering whether she was ready to experience the exact same possible epiphany that she expected from me. Was she prepared to say, if I poured my vision out to her, whether that could bring her peace, give more sense for her existence and change everything?

Then I wondered when was I ever ready to encounter anything that might subvert my life and as I was digging through my mental

palace—which I call "tam tam"—I realized this is my constant wish. Although, since I am not eight years old or "crazy," things I encounter do not alter my reality on daily basis. At the same time they definitely do. But whenever I look for new bands, whenever there is a new record that has come out, whenever I go to a show to see acts I have not heard of before—I want them to, I hope they will be something so good I cannot even imagine them, like experiencing a new color, so fresh that it will turn my world upside down. I'm driven to search for this forever; this is why I look for bands that don't recycle already existing forms but, instead, invent their own sound that reflects on their own environment and conditions.

This is why *MRR* is such an important institution. It is not a channel that filters the world of punk but a platform where everyone has the chance to show what they are up to. A chance to alter even *MRR* itself. Although I spent manic weekends counting issues without scene reports and made statistics on the amount and outcome of US vs. non-US reviews, still *MRR* provides a chance for bands to show who they are, what they do and why do they do it.

Punk turns bad when platforms are mistaken as filters and effort is wasted trying to fit the shit to the pipe. I appreciate that *MRR* was able to shift from an important and cool radical publication to a chaotic mess no one really seemed to care about anymore and then back, sometimes within a quarter of a year. It shows that *MRR* only cared about itself, made mistakes, and presented what punk was. No one can escape this responsibility: all punks made *MRR* what it is.

I stopped writing my column because I got bored of the modern bands and of my modern self. I got upset by my unsuccessful adventures to find bands in hidden places who played amazing music. Many of these foreign sites were empty. I got tired of bands' sonic searches that turned to following and got tired of me waiting on something to happen. I also got bored of telling my opinion. I rather wanted to hear others. I felt I was just filling out a template every month, and I felt I'd rather hear others opinion; I'd rather be a manic fan of someone else than try to beat some sense into my typing.

I miss stories and it feels as if the modern world takes them away. I still get excited about bands and feel like I should tell the whole world, not sure exactly whether they sound amazing or even how much *I* love their amazing sound, but I also feel guilty for trying to shape the world around me by trying to convince others to feel the unbearable enthusiasm I got from some nonsense guitar parts. I feel bad when I dump a lot of information on people. I can give someone years of music and they will just have it without their own part of ownership. Without the search, without figuring things out, without luck, without excitement, detective games, paying attention, to lack, to desire and finally be satisfied with something completely different.

This is a bleak future, one without everyone having their own reference points, sounds, shameful mistakes, hidden favorites. I would like everyone to be different, unique with only excitement in common. And if we are lucky, we will end up at the same places but via different paths. Forget echoes, I want to learn about new things rather than to hear how similar others are.

This is might sound stupid but please respect my "crazy" idea, I invested a lot of time into developing it.

I also do cheat in every possible and lame way but there is nothing that I like better than the bands I have found on my own.

Stories are key. I wonder why at 32 I prefer to listen to 16 year olds who recorded their songs 30 years ago. It might be because they were not even intended to invent anything that is hailed and strictly followed now but they expressed their own stories with whatever they had. And they did not have too much. When they learned and tried to play music, they failed.

I thought a lot about Cosey Fanni Tutti writing that THROBBING GRISTLE played industrial music as a reflection of the industrial environment of their then-contemporary life and not because they liked how they sounded. The result—the songs—was the end of the fun. If it was self-expression for them that we can only witness, listen to, then that is it. We cannot fully relive or participate in their experience. Should we at all?

By liking how they sound, would we like what they were reflecting on? Or should we like what they were doing? Do you know that I am not only talking about THROBBING GRISTLE but mostly all crasher crust bands who keep singing about nuclear wars and genocides?

We should tell our own stories rather than reproduce reflections, it is way too meta to be real. SORTO, WRETCHED, and CONFUSE are some of my favorite bands because they were brave enough to run ahead, move forward, not stop at lines. If I complain about the current scenes then I do not want Italian bands to sound like BEDBOYS or STINKY RATS, nor do I want the reanimation of SOLUNSKI FRONT or DISTRESS in Serbia but I want local bands to be brave and inventive enough to tell their current stories the way they want, inspired by the boldness of past bands who created something new and they stopped but have not finished anything. Punk is still open. Everything is.

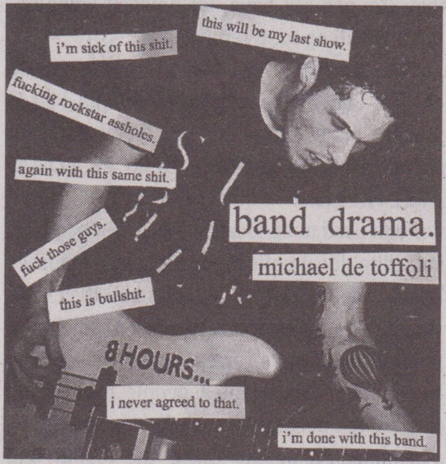
The good thing in punk, and in everything else, is that if you are brave enough and if you just put in everything you feel then it will sound, look, be amazing. Hello PIG DNA, EXIT HIPPIES.

Punk used to be local, it was about personal suffering, local politics, inside jokes, diatribes against the neighbors. Regions had their own sound. Now bands sound like record labels and festivals with slots for exclusive shows. The same, few, very talented people master and mix a large percent of records, the same, few, very talented people make the layout and design for a large percent of records. They sound and look the same no matter if they are from different continents. It tells a lot about a subculture, it tells almost nothing about the people and their context. It is pretty boring.

It fuels me to read about PLASMID practicing and recording on the forth floor of their block of flats. In the current environment there would be people trying to book that exact same room for a studio session. We mistake uniqueness for future standards. I do think it is amazing what La Vida Es Un Mus does but it should be an example of how one built this from a basement and how brave some of his choices were. And now we can yelp "oh Spanish punk is trendy" or "bands from Singapore are hyped" but why don't you make your local scene cool, unique, better, different? Why wait on others?

I grew up in Budapest, Hungary. It is the capital of a Central European country. We are not as exotic as the Balkans but wild and damaged enough to be misunderstood by the West. I spent most of my time in a small room listening to punk music in a flat in a six floor brutalist building that was a part of several streets of concrete block. In this hole I started to write what ended up here. *MRR* thought it was cool what I was doing and I am still not cool. But I did what I felt was missing from my world and it turned out it had place at *MRR*. Via this, I have become a part of something bigger. I received messages from people who still shock me if I think about how they like what I do. Shout out to the Swedish guy who offered me to smash his face with a brick! I still cannot believe that Layla hired me for this, my favorite punk writer. I guess the conclusion is obvious. Just tell your fucking story and fuck shit up.

COLUMNS



Bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner, and I believe that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together all these things need to be addressed. That's what this column is here for: to discuss why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. In almost every way this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

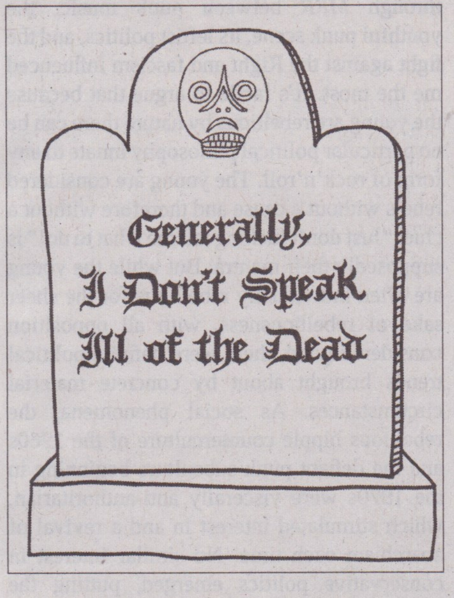
I have a running list of topics and issues that bands face that I choose to talk about each month, and it's nice to take a few weeks to reflect on it and try to really formulate an opinion. Examine my own personal experiences, listen to other's experiences, consider the opposite side and try to consider how each member involved felt and what they went through. I get to feel healthy and centered when doing this, but something that I tend to forget about is that feeling of being blindsided and having to process everything on the fly. I'm writing this in my room at 12:49 a.m. now that I'm home from band practice, during which we lost a band member. I walked into the studio tonight literally only ten minutes late and one of our guitarists was absent. There was a tense feeling in the room and everyone just kind of fell into a song without talking.

An hour later when we took a break they told me that our guitarist "Rachel" wasn't in the band anymore. I literally chuckled and sipped my beer, totally brushing it off. Our guitarist "Neil" reiterated that she was gone and that was it. I didn't even process it. Of course she's not gone. I was ten minutes late, there is no way a decision like that could be reached in ten minutes. Neil hadn't been happy with her for a while apparently, but she's only been in the band for about a year so she's still finding her voice. She herself has also been frustrated apparently because she doesn't feel like she's made much progress in finding her footing as well. Regardless, parting ways is a huge decision with five band members involved, and there's no way we can objectively make huge decisions in one night, let alone ten minutes. Once the others started weighing in and I heard their sides and opinions it started to take shape and become real. Still, I wasn't going to agree to this in one night, and I was confident in that.

The more we talked and started to put pieces together I could see that this was much bigger and longer than one evening, and I started to feel the cold sweat of considering the fact that she may no longer be a part of this band. When I think back, it's true. She hadn't been happy, both with our process and with her own clashing with that. She's hard on herself, and I've seen that a lot. I understand, and I've always tried to downplay that struggle because I want to be the factor that reiterates that the positive outweighs the struggle and she's totally worth it. This is her first time playing our genre of music, and we're admittedly horrible at communicating what's happening, let alone being effective teachers in any sense of the word. Neil knows exactly what he wants but has never been very good at communicating it, using body language and conflicted vibes in lieu of words. We know the genre really well because we all grew up with it, so we can pick up on what band's influence he's channeling and follow him from there. She's brand new to this, so she's treading water in an ocean of material without any of us being an effective life preserver. On the other hand, she does admittedly have a lot on her plate with work and outside projects, plus recently getting out of a big relationship doesn't leave a lot of emotional room to struggle every week and essentially fall behind from the rest of us. We go on tour next month and I know she's been stressing about that as well, so it very well could be too much too fast with horrible timing. By the end of the night I was starting to consider what I wasn't at all willing to put on the table: what if she's honestly just not the right fit at this point in everyone's life?

Fuck, that's hard to consider. She gels with us really well on a personal level, and her instincts musically being so different from ours was really inspiring and I felt like she was breathing new life into the band. The problem was that it wasn't consistent, and every time she was flying blind without a parachute hoping that she'll land on something cleanly that will benefit us as a whole. But the adrenaline and uncertainty didn't leave her any room to retain any of what she was doing so she couldn't find a groove to replicate it. If we had time, and we were better at communicating, we could commit to that time to address her struggles and help her through it. But we've been a band for ten years and we have a shorthand that's hard to clearly draw out. Honestly if someone wants to join our family they're going to need a lot of time and patience to push themselves to figure us all out. If she's at a point in her life that she doesn't have that to give, than maybe it's time to part ways. I absolutely hate that feeling and it completely breaks my heart, but just because we're open to finding another member to add to what we're making doesn't mean we can assign that role out of convenience. I want to assume that I've encountered enough shit to be able to apply scars to any situation, but honestly things like this transcend logic. It's not something that you decide with your head. It's not worth it to fight the current if the goal is to convince the ocean otherwise, and sometimes the first instinct is worth giving the lead to. At these times you don't even have to follow the lead, you can just float and let the current make the right decisions. Damn it, that makes me so sad to to write it out and acknowledge it, but I guess it feels a little better to therapeutically write it out and make it real. I don't know if there's necessarily any advice in there, expect that sometimes the best option is the only option, and sometimes letting someone go is best for everyone, but fuck I'm really going to miss her. Guess I'm all grown up now.

Each month BAND DRAMA will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. I feel like it might be even easier now that *Maximum* will transition to being fully online, so the connection will be even quicker and easier. We ain't dead yet, and we'll get each other through this just like we do everything else. So if you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general (anonymously or not) reach out to banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past sixteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended or failed. I'd like to think that I've grown from each, learned from each, and taken the time to reflect on each failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing and I always will be. So I want to share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.



I started this column the same way I have the past 9 months or so—I opened up a spiral notebook to look at a list of barely half thought-out column ideas. Most of these ideas are only a few words long, and probably thought up in the shower. A few days after each month's deadline, I look at them and sigh to myself—I know that none of the ideas written down are worthy of the pages of *MRR*, but I have to choose one of them and just run with it. This month, I have that same feeling that all my ideas are complete drivel, but with the added sadness that I won't get the chance to write them all. Sure, I probably never would have written 1,500 words on "not punk in high school, not punk for life," but now that I can't, I really want to. Does a "long-form review of *Metal Machine Music* as an entry point for discussing the history of musique concrète" even belong in a magazine about contemporary punk? Absolutely not, but I am going to regret not being able to write it. And certainly no one would want to read a column that claims "the most recent tiki revival is a direct critique on Donald Trump," who found pu-pu platters so tacky that he personally closed down Trader Vic's in 1989. That was a column I was excited to write as the election closed in. So, too, will I regret not writing about how leap day is the greatest holiday waiting to be turned punk, or a plea that Halloween celebrations be returned to October 31, regardless of the day of the week. And honestly, I don't even remember what headspace I was in when I scrawled "putting out records is not a worthwhile pursuit," but now I even want to write that too.

But what actually merits a place in the last monthly print issue of *MRR*? Well, it seems fitting that I should dedicate my small space to something other than my own asinine ideas. Instead, let me sing the praises of my favorite record: *You Goddam Kids!* by GEZA X And The MOMMYMEN.

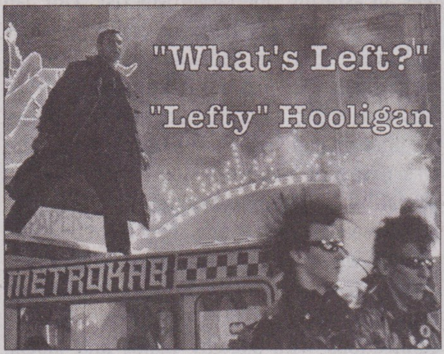
As a bona fide power pal, I've sung the praises of GEZA to anyone who would listen for years. I stopped a gig to explain that it was he himself, the first true genius of American punk, who invented the headset microphone, and as such I felt totally comfortable using one—despite the objective correlative to late '90s mega-pop. Every day, when I pop a handful of pills, I ask the ether in a nasally voice, "Doctor, what's wrong with me? Doctor, what's wrong with me? Doctor, what's wrong with me?" When I sit down with a nearly finished recording, I always invoke the muse. "Save us, Geza," I ask, and end up adding a few extra layers of xylophone or jaw harp. He pervades almost every aspect of my life, and if you have time, I'd like to talk to you for a moment about our Lord and savior, GEZA X.

You Goddam Kids! may be GEZA's only eponymous LP release (though his band SILVER CHALICE would put out an LP in 1985—not nearly the *KBD* gem of their '79 7", but still worth a listen), but by the time it came out in 1981, Geza was already credited in the liner notes on almost every release from California that matters. As a product of 1960s counterculture, Geza was a bit older than his Hollywood contemporaries and was one of the few new punks who had some tangible know-how behind a mixing board, though much of his pre-punk experience was recording "lot of mariachi and disco" bands. Because he was working in the studio across the street from the Masque, he ended up being the sound guy there, "sort of by default." But, being behind the soundboard at the Masque made him the most visible and obvious choice to produce a whole slew of records that were about to spew forth from the LA scene.

Working constantly as the in-house engineer for Dangerhouse and the entire Hollywood scene meant that the last thing Geza really wanted to do after a long day of black-beauties and recording was work on his own records. He likens it to a gardener's own lawn being in complete disarray. So, we are left with precious few GEZA X recordings—despite his influence on other people's recordings stretching further than almost any other punk.

So why is this LP, itself, so special? A lot of bands like to make the claim that they don't really sound like anyone else. In most cases, that statement is self-aggrandizing delusion. *You Goddam Kids!* actually doesn't sound like any other record. You could make some comparisons to the funkier BLACK RANDY songs, but the MOMMYMEN aren't really funky, despite their heavy use of saxophones. This is undeniably a punk record—the songs are relatively simple in their structure. The arrangement, though, is just absolutely wild. Geza concerns himself with texture. There are xylophones; there are backup vocals in soprano, alto, tenor, and bass registers; the record oozes with horns; there are bleeps and bloops and bells and whistles everywhere. Even something as simple as the guitar tone was over-thought until it became something mesmerizingly new—the "Gezatone." That can be heard in an earlier incarnation on the *Lexicon Devil* 7", as instead of running through an amp, Geza ran Pat's guitar through a dozen pedals and then straight into the board. And there's a reason why that 7" version is so much better than the LP version, no? Mainly, Geza was more adventurous than his contemporaries when it came to venturing out of sonic pockets. The lyrics is endearingly cheesy, but what else would you expect from a genuine eccentric like Geza? Any time I get frustrated with recording in the digital age, I imagine him on the floor of his studio, cutting the JOSIE COTTON demo into a million different pieces and splicing each one back together again. To him, there were never any shortcuts to making art, but what's the point of creating something if you aren't going to unnecessarily overcomplicate it?

So, why did I use this last column in the last issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* to discuss GEZA X? Well, because Geza still makes his living recording, mixing, and mastering. He doesn't charge extra because he's a legend—just honest and affordable rates because he's doing what he loves. A few years ago, he mixed and mastered a 7" for a band I was in for $200—and he didn't phone it in, either. He went out of his way to ask for a couple parts to be re-recorded because he truly cared about the end product. My point is that you can still contact him via his "Studio X at The Vortex," and he will be more than happy to work on your record. The world still needs more records that Geza works on, and your band can help remedy that. I couldn't be more excited to hear what you create together.



[E]verything that was in opposition was good…
—Michael Baumann, *How It All Began*, 1975

No one who likes swing can become a Nazi.
—Arvid (Frank Whaley), *Swing Kids*, 1993

It was Movie Night at *Maximum Rocknroll* at the old Clipper Street headquarters circa 1994. The featured movie was Thomas Carter's 1993 film *Swing Kids*. It was Tim and me and maybe one other person. I think Tim actually made Jiffy Pop popcorn and I had my ubiquitous six pack. The plot was simple; as the Nazi Party rises to power in pre-WWII Germany a tight countercultural scene of young kids grow their hair long, wear British fashion and use Harlem slang as they listen to banned American swing music, hold underground dances and street fight the Hitler Youth. Two rebellious young men take different paths—one into the Hitler Youth, the other into the Swing Kids and eventually jail.

The parallels to the mid-1990s were clear, with the rise of the Right politically and the explosion of punk's second hardcore wave in the streets. After the closing credits rolled and Tim popped out the VHS tape he made the connections explicit. "Punk is like swing was in Nazi Germany. It's the core of a revolutionary youth culture with rebellious kids resisting fascism in the streets."

Tim loved punk, no doubt about it, but he was also on a mission. He not only wanted to cover the scene and its music, he wanted to push the politics of punk to the fore. And that link between punk music, the scene, its politics, and the fight against the Right is crucial to understanding both Tim Yo and his project, *MRR*. Tim considered *MRR* a lynchpin between punk music and the punk scene on the one hand and the Left's fight against reactionary politics on the other hand.

Tim was a friend. We both loved punk rock but whereas I had eclectic tastes ranging from pop to noise Tim insisted on only the rawest, most aggressive three chord rock'n'roll. We didn't hang out together at shows although we were sometimes at the same shows. We were both politically on the Left although he was a mellowing Marxist-Leninist and I was an aspiring libertarian Marxist. Tim had a loud raucous belly laugh, could hit a fly ball over the fence, and was dedicated to the punk scene like nobody's business. But he was also rigid, authoritarian, and sometimes an unmitigated asshole. In fact, when Tim was dying of non-Hodgkins lymphoma and preparing *MRR*'s transition team to take over, he advised us never to shy away from being an asshole when it was warranted. Meaning, we needed to stand firm about making the tough decisions—firing idiot shitworkers, refusing connections with sketchy bands and labels, cutting out cancerous corporate influences—whenever necessary. Tim and I were friends, but we weren't ever "besties." And I was never part of the coterie of friends who played Risk at the *MRR* house. Tim had modified the rules to make the game more ruthless, and there was no better metaphor than that long-running Risk game for Tim's aspirations to punk rock world domination.

This tribute to Tim is also about the print edition of *MRR*. But *MRR*, which began publishing as a zine in 1982, started much earlier as a radio show in 1973. Both the early years of the radio show and the beginnings of the magazine involved a quadrumvirate of pioneering punkers—Tim Yo, Ruth Schwartz, Jeff Bale, and Jello Biafra—who changed punk rock in the Bay Area and internationally. Never the sharpest shōnen knife in the punk rock drawer, Jello fully deserved losing the Dead Kennedys back catalog for ripping off his band. Now a para-alt-rightwinger, Jeff Bale dropped racial epithets when his vintage sports car was vandalized by black kids. A millionaire hipster capitalist, Ruth Schwartz abandoned her *faux* conscious capitalist ethics when confronted with unionizing efforts by workers at Mordam Records. Having known and worked with them all, the only one I truly trusted was Tim Yo who, despite his personal flaws and political problems, was forthright, genuine, and completely dedicated to the scene. Tim helped me get the job at Mordam and in turn I fed him inside information about the distributor. When Tim moved to drop Mordam as *MRR*'s distributor, I gave Tim detailed backroom distribution and sales information ahead of the move, and provided him with lists of the distributors and sub-distributors Mordam dealt with. My punk loyalty was to Tim and *MRR*, first and foremost.

Tim's influence on punk rock was epic and wide ranging. Tim and *MRR* arguably coined the term DIY—do it yourself—as well as defined the anti-corporate, bottom-up, decentralized nature of punk rock with regular scene reports and calls to "support your local scene," two crucial characteristics of punk. Punk projects that Tim initiated—from the radio show to Gilman Street—are still going strong today. He made "no major labels" the magazine's rallying cry. And Tim was an adamant anti-fascist, insisting that the magazine and affiliated projects have absolutely no truck with Nazis. He routinely confronted Nazis when the entire Gilman Street community shut down punk shows in response to Nazi skins in the pit. The vagaries of print media notwithstanding, *MRR* kept publishing for 16 years under Tim's direction and 20 years after his death, quite a feat for an all-volunteer not-for-profit punk zine. Tim's insistence that punk rock get back to basics with his 1994 purge of *MRR*'s record collection and music coverage forced punk to return to three chords and the truth, the basis for the music's original greatness that fostered a revival of the genre.

Ultimately, the connections Tim fostered through *MRR* between punk music, the youthful punk scene, its leftist politics, and the fight against the Right and fascism influenced me the most. It's facile to argue that because the young are rebellious by nature there can be no particular political philosophy innate to any form of rock'n'roll. The young are considered rebels without a cause and therefore without a clue. "Just don't fucking tell me what to do!" is supposedly their mantra. But while the young are often individually rebellious for the sheer sake of rebelliousness, with all opposition considered good, there were definite political trends brought about by concrete material circumstances. As social phenomena, the rebellious hippie counterculture of the 1960s and the defiant punk subculture beginning in the 1970s were viscerally anti-authoritarian, which stimulated interest in and a revival of anarchism each time. No similar interest in conservative politics emerged, putting the lie to the claim that "conservatives are the new punk." Fascism remained anathema irrespective of these youthful rebellions.

It's equally facile to contend that because Tim witnessed the '60s radical youth counterculture firsthand and was rumored to have been in the Revolutionary Communist Party in the '70s he intended *MRR* to be a punk rock Bolshevik Party. As I pointed out above regarding *MRR*'s origins, Tim worked with a collection of fellow punks who differed wildly from him politically. *MRR* was frequently criticized as narrow-minded, politically correct, and elitist, but it never attempted to be a political vanguard for punk. The magazine's shitworkers and columnists were diverse and their politics, while generally left wing, were eclectic. Tim had strong opinions and politics, but he was never a punk rock Stalin.

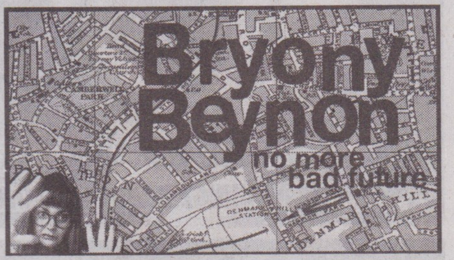
I was making links between punk and politics before I moved to the Bay Area. Joining *MRR* and working with Tim not only deepened those links, it changed my life. Not miraculously, but nevertheless significantly. My musical experience broadened dramatically as a result of hanging out at the *MRR* house. The anti-statist and anti-authoritarian components to my left libertarian politics grew more sophisticated, thanks in large part to Tim making me a columnist. I was always a writer, but I became a published author with a literary and internet presence during my tenure as "Lefty" Hooligan. I'll continue writing and probably do some version of my monthly "What's Left?" column online until they pry my cold dead hands from my keyboard. As of this writing, the future of *MRR* as a punk project remains to be determined. It began as a radio show, so it looks to continue as a radio show for the foreseeable future. The record reviews and other punk related reviews should be going up online shortly. And slowly,

painfully, the full archive of *MRR*'s print era, the magazine in all its glory, will eventually be posted online. "Long live *Maximum Rocknroll*" is a reality, and the project will go mostly digital to survive.

There's a long tradition on the Latin American Left of using the word *¡Presente!* (Here! Present!) to invoke the memory of those comrades who died in the struggle for a better world. So this is only fitting:

Tim Yohannan. *¡Presente!*

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA: *You can download free EPUB, MOBI, PDF, and DOCX files of my latest cyberpunk mystery story "The Death of David Pickett" at 62milepress.com/the-death-of-david-pickett. To find links to my blogs, websites, Facebook, and Instagram, visit my social media aggregator at gamatiasz.com. You can purchase copies of my near-future science fiction thriller "1% Free" through either site.*



I steeple my hands with palm fronds. The plant does not speak back. I remind myself I wasn't talking out loud so I've no right to be annoyed. Back in Sydney after seven months in exile in London, or is it the other way around? Tropical rain is still rain. It would serve you well to re-examine your notion of home. It's gauche to say it because wow, what freedom and what luck to leave where I was born and to make homes in other corners, but two lives in two cities is maybe too much for my big hot heart! Opening my throat again at a reconvened band practice to feel the full weight of old songs, seems like the heavy weight was ballast, after all. What's more, these are tiny, unregistrable sadnesses on the Great Scale of Pain. It's on this that the world's traumas constantly have to recalibrate to account for how much worse it can get.

I'm refreshing the news right now because a man has taken guns to a mosque and he has written things he read about on the internet onto those guns and then he has shot those guns at the people inside and now his bullets are under their skin, mangling the insides of them, the delicately held together parts that their mothers built so they could live. I absorb this information and I then go to the gig and drink three beers and an espresso martini. Nobody mentions it. What has happened has happened insomuch as I have read about it on the internet. They need volunteers to wash the bodies. Now someone has thrown an egg at an elected fascist and it feels good. We run towards the good feeling. How are we going to overcome this?

CHRONOPHAGE's album is called *Prolog for Tomorrow*. Make sure you eat up the sensation of being joyfully blindsided when something this good slides on by you in the sewage river of contemporary sounds. You'll wanna venture a finger in the sludge to save this one, seemingly output from a totally complete genius universe. On this recording, you can hear the room and there are mature roots growing around all the amps. Everything, and I mean, *everything*, is sprouting. You don't need glue to hold it all together just some fuzz and a prayer. These are the spiritual inversions you need as the world outside folds in on itself. You face them down in the sewer to thank them but they shake the nub end of a rubber crucifix in your face and turn away. Grinning.

SOOT, from Brisbane, have a tape called *Pockmarked with…Soot!* There is yelling and clanging and you spin and you win the demented tombola when the horn hits. The siblinghood of the bent notes. It almost stops completely at points. Three hatched brains slurping up the albumen. "I can't speak when I feel this way." Open your whole throat to the world and laugh as you gag and let your neon bile get all up in the global urethra. Soon you'll be lost in the boy-girl goy-birl sing song, taken out totally by an incessant glockenspiel. Then, after all that, they chose to cover "Give Me Back My Man" by the B-52s. In the recently moments when I have been struggling, adrift, totally confused, I have put on the original on repeat and zoned out to Cindy's wail. The SOOT version is like a detuned, heard-through-a-wall echo of the original, i.e. exactly how it sounds when I sing along. Perfect.

Did you know Fred Schneider was in BONGWATER for a minute there, too? Have you heard this group? Absolute mid-eighties nut job sounds from which test the limits of what could reasonably be categorized as "song." There are monologues set to half-heard psych out of space and out of time, wild yelps towards the light. These dream journals set to mental journeyed rock but the joke is deadly serious, too many words in one line and no regard for anything like a tune. Their best songs are led by sardonic get-it-out-of-me rage of Ann Magnuson, evidently a renowned performance artist and East Village legend who consorted with Keith and Jean-Michel. It figures that this scene held hands under the banners, too. B-52s were much more than "Rock Lobster." BONGWATER sang about assassinating Jesse Helms. The single-minded preoccupation of exposing the galling hypocrisy and saving their friends' and lovers' lives and that undergirded so much of the first and second waves of AIDS Activism has a cool inverse in the free wheeling yet still laser focussed art and music connected to it all. Everyone was doing their part. I re-watched the ACTUP documentary called *How to Survive a Plague* recently, where you see Keith Haring and many other non-famous people at meetings. While there is much to discuss about that doc in regards to who is not shown, whose stories are followed and not, it's an incredibly moving document of how to change the world." If you are my age maybe you remember films and TV that side-eyed at the crisis, referenced it in evermore subtle ways, subtler still until it was all gone, forgotten, a historical nugget. No. We owe it to everyone who did not survive to look at what happened during these times through the eyes of those who were there and those who did not make it. Schulman's *Gentrification of the Mind* revs this idea up further. What are the stories we tell ourselves about these disasters? That they have ended? That PrEP is just a random science miracle? Every inch crept towards humanity has a corresponding death toll and an arrest count. If our planet does not, somehow, burn up to a crispy husk in the next ten years, this will be why.

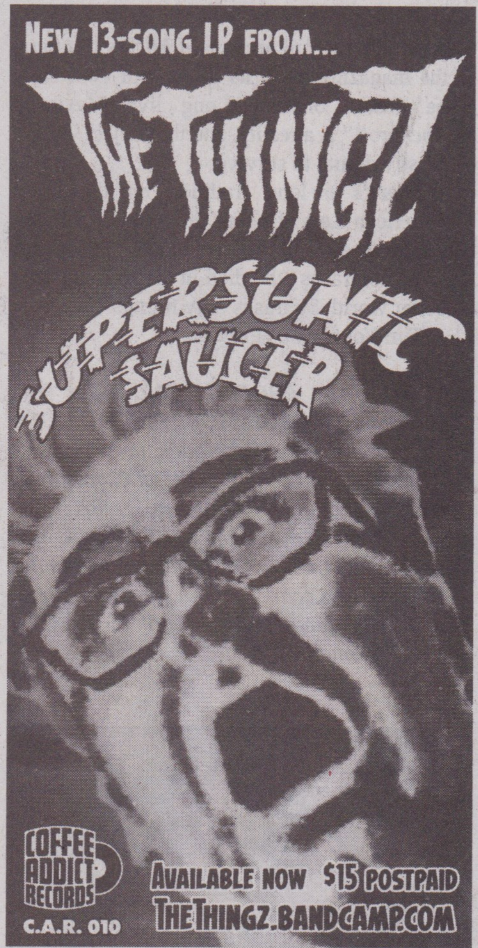
I had a vivid dream last night about a room full of lamps. I had to choose one to take but the bulbs kept flickering out. We are hot fuses who cannot leave each other in the dark. This is my last attempt at flinging observations for print towards the counter-institution that changed my life. Ten years deep. Damn. I hope it's okay. I hope you're okay.

In lieu of the advice column I never wrote, a couple of commandments from me to close us out: Never suck the dick of someone who acts like they deserve it. It's also okay to be inscrutable, illegible to the squares, a total shapeshifter. You don't have to lock yourself down with a fixed identity if it doesn't serve you to do so, and if you do, the lock combination is yours alone. The statistical chance that you will find all your people at the punk gig is honestly close to zero, so make sure you speak to strangers. Open the windows and doors of your alienation palace and air it out, remembering what Assata said: "A wall is just a wall and nothing more at all." Be suspicious of anyone who takes joy from pulling other people down. That will to silence, wherever it comes from, is a will against the sputtering engine of a fairer future world, our only hope, the last word: solidarity.

COLUMNS

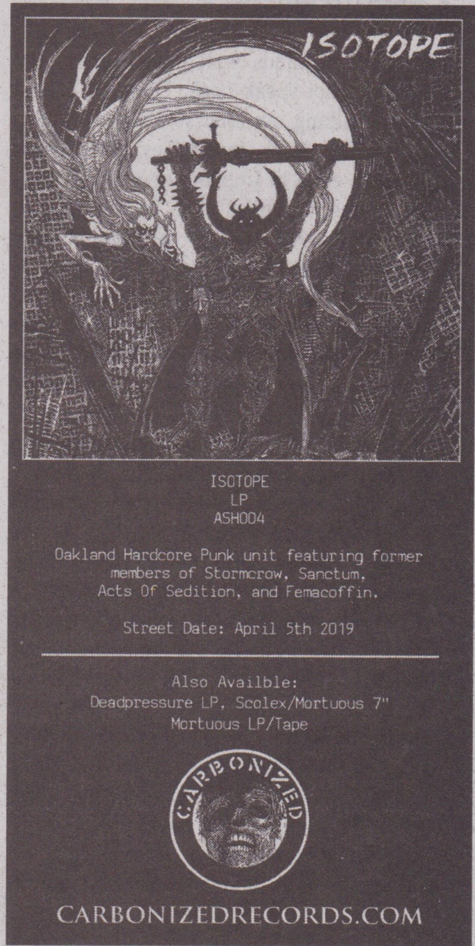
ALMOST READY RECORDS
NEW RELEASES !!!!!!!
RAVI SHAVI
BLACKOUT DELUXE
THE EMBARRASSMENT
THE EMBARRASSMENT EP
THE HUNCHES
THE HUNCHES
SAME NEW THING
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK !!!!!
135 Huntington St
Brooklyn NY 11231
(718) 852-7746
BUY SELL TRADE
WWW.ALMOSTREADYRECORDS.COM

FINANCIAL RUIN RECORDS
OUT NOW
THUNDERCLAP - INEBRIOCEAN LP
Drunk in the swamp, amps on 10!
Like hearing the Melvins live score Roadhouse on 70mm.
FROM MEMBERS OF DISCOUNT, THE DRAFT, ARMY OF PONCH, AND OTHER FLORIDA FAVORITES!
STILL OUT
HORSEWHIP - S/T LP*
Churning frustration and disgust.
FEAT. AN ALL-STAR CAST...MEMBERS OF
REVERSAL OF MAN
COMBATWOUNDEDVETERAN
& EARLY GRACE
*Orange vinyl limited to 300 copies (impress your nerd friends!)
OUT NEXT
DEATHSLAUGHTER
THE LAST GREAT WAR OF HUMANITY LP
Blazing filth, and evil from the cemeteries of Brazil.
Somewhere between early Sarcafago, Rotting Christ, & Coffin Joe. (Limited to 150 copies)
MEATWOUND - TRASH APPARATUS 7"
MOB TERROR - SUPERSTIMULUS 12"
MEATWOUND
CULERO LP
Third album of troubling garbage fury from the middle of Florida. Setting fire to 40+ years of nightmare sounds and roasting the future.
ALL TITLES AVAILABLE FROM DEAD TANK RECORDS & EBULLITION
THANKS TO MRR FOR RAISING US BEFORE THE INTERNET!



NEW 13-SONG LP FROM...
THE THINGZ
SUPERSONIC SAUCER
COFFEE ADDICT RECORDS
C.A.R. 010
AVAILABLE NOW $15 POSTPAID
THETHINGZ.BANDCAMP.COM

2 AM MONDAYS
MAXIMUM ROCK & ROLL RADIO
HTTP://WWW.
RADIO
VALENCIA.FM
UNFUCK YOUR HEAD
TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE MISSION
RADIO VALENCIA
SAN FRANCISCO



ISOTOPE
ISOTOPE
LP
ASH004
Oakland Hardcore Punk unit featuring former members of Stormcrow, Sanctum, Acts Of Sedition, and Femacoffin.
Street Date: April 5th 2019
Also Availble:
Deadpressure LP, Scolex/Mortuous 7"
Mortuous LP/Tape
CARBONIZED
CARBONIZEDRECORDS.COM

NOT AT WAR - JUST AT WAR WITH OURSELVES...

Rio Grande Valley

SCENE REPORT

BY ANDRES SANCHEZ

The Rio Grande Valley is an obstruction of the dawn's early light; the more we grow, the longer our shadow becomes. Historically, we've almost never been allowed to speak for ourselves as a region, so as a musician from the RGV who has been given a platform to do so, I believe it is absolutely essential that you, the dear reader, understand a few things about this place before I tell you about our music scene.

From 1915 to 1919, hundreds of white men (some Texas Rangers, some vigilantes) killed thousands upon thousands of Mexican and Indigenous people living in the southernmost tip of Texas, which stretches along the northern channel of the Rio Grande (Big River): the de facto border between the United States and Mexico. This poorly documented period of time is considered to have begun following an event known as The *Matanza* (Massacre) of 1915. Entire families were lynched, their homes were destroyed, and countless bodies were left to rot in the Texas sun, forgotten where they fell. This event was not officially acknowledged by local governments until 2014.

Following this massacre, droves of white male entrepreneurs flocked to the area, capitalizing on the bloodshed to develop the region and attract more white settlers, or as the Wikipedia page entry citing a resource guide for elderly white tourists known as "Winter Texans" calls it, "capitalizing on unclaimed land". These men bought land and named it after themselves and their businesses (my hometown of Weslaco was named after the W.E. Stewart Land Company, for example). Developers like citrus magnate John Shary imported hundreds of palm trees to exotify the area, and in an attempt to market it to tourists, the region was christened "El Magico Valle Del Rio Grande," which is not just grammatically incorrect in Spanish, but geographically incorrect as well, as the Rio Grande Valley is actually a floodplain. It's haphazard decisions like these that have come to shape the Valley as we know it today: a region of conflict, if not between us and our own government, then within ourselves as pressure mounts with age to determine who and what we are based on where we come from. When your place of origin is a borderland, specifically one like ours where the cultures on both sides of the border are pressured to be different from one another and yet share a deeply symbiotic relationship, this becomes a complicated task. With a history warped by cultural assimilation and erasure, we are forced to carve our identities out of our existence on an invisible line between two nations; the living blade of a double-edged sword.

Even well beyond integration, the Mexican-American majority of the RGV lived under the boot heel of its white ruling class, with change coming only when the community fought back, some sadly losing their lives. Two such examples are the Elsa Walkouts of 1968, where students of Elsa High School walked out of their classes to protest the school's punishment of students for speaking Spanish, and the Pharr Riots of 1971, which began as a protest outside the Pharr Police Department following their repeated racist targeting and violent treatment of Mexican-American residents, and was escalated to a violent clash by Pharr PD resulting in many arrests and the death of a young boy: Alfonso Loredo Flores was shot by police after hurriedly exiting a nearby barbershop where he was getting his hair cut to see what was going on. As you would assume, none of this history is taught in our schools, let alone documented properly, and has mostly survived by being passed down from generation to generation. As far as the local governments are concerned, the past is to be forgotten and the present is theirs for the taking. In that way, the Rio Grande Valley is as American as you can get.

Some of our cities and towns may appear on teleprompters from time to time when the mass media feels like reporting about "the border", but the voices being heard are more often than not those of people who are not from here and know nothing about us. We have been called a warzone, compared to a third world country for being a largely Mexican-American region (by our own governor while running for election in 2014, no less), and considered the host to a non-existent immigration crisis.

Rio Grande Valley

Our current President continues to peddle this lie at the expense of this country's people, to support his redundant demands for a border wall which not only will destroy countless ecosystems and displace countless RGV landowners and their families, but will do absolutely nothing to deter the migration of people to our country. This performative alarm has done nothing but bring us pain and suffering. The only crisis that exists here is that which has been created by our own federal government.

In case you didn't know, we've already had a partial border barrier built for over a decade; it stretches across the entire Rio Grande Valley and is heavily monitored by armed border patrol units on the ground and big, white surveillance blimps in the sky (not sure if they're armed, but who knows at this point). You can't even visit the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge (land that used to belong to my personal ancestors, by the way) which sits along the border without being stopped by Border Patrol and asked to verify your citizenship and your purpose for visiting the refuge (god forbid you want to be around trees, visit your grandparents' grandparents' unmarked graves in the cemetery on the property, and I dunno, maybe see the Rio Grande river with your own two eyes for a change). The same goes for visiting any place along the levee upon which the border fence sits, despite the fact that both sides of it are on US land.

It's been like this since the cartel violence hit a peak in the mid-2000s, and yet, not a single instance of spillover violence has occurred in that time. Border Patrol have yet to stop a single disaster from making its way to our region, and yet more and more of our brainwashed neighbors join their ranks every year, because unlike with other unskilled labor fields in the RGV, border security money puts really nice food on the table. As a result, our own people are arresting and deporting their neighbors, and the agents facilitating the separation of asylum-seeking families at our ports of entry (which continues to this day) are from here and the descendants of immigrants themselves. This degree of blind self-hatred is prevalent throughout many parts of the Valley and is the result of generations upon generations of the aforementioned cultural assimilation and erasure; we are American through our learned self-destruction.

Valley Feedback Loop

At many points throughout the Rio Grande Valley's history, music has played a pivotal role in our cultural development and given us many points of pride. From regional variations of Mexican folk music such as Conjunto and Tejano taking center stage, to our very own waves of rock n' roll and pop music using cultural assimilation as fuel for youthful rebellion that ends up topping national charts, the Rio Grande Valley—in its own complicated way—has made great contributions to the overall canon of Texas music. A lot of this history has now been compiled in the documentary As I Walk Through the Valley, which follows the Rio Grande Valley music scene from these origin points to its modern punk heyday. The film was created by two people: Charlie Vela, a local producer, recording engineer, and musician, and Ronnie Garza, a local musician and activist: two people with no film backgrounds whatsoever who were so tired of letting the RGV scene wilt in the shadows that they took it upon themselves to make a documentary about it. I highly recommend you watch it, as it also features the only modern coverage of the Rio Grande Valley's first punk band ever, The Steroids, a quintet who sounded like fans of both The Buzzcocks and X (no, not the Australian one). Prior to this film, no one under the age of 40 knew who the Steroids were. The band never released any recordings and following the death of their drummer Ray Sarabia, disbanded in the early 80s. However, I have it on good information that recordings exist. How they will be released, if at all, is up in the air, but Dale, the bass player, has taken it upon himself to compile all known footage of the band on a youtube channel called The Steroids Channel, which you can obsess over in the meantime. Now, for all that As I Walk Through the Valley does cover, it leaves much to be desired in terms of coverage of the RGV scene as it exists today. You can stop groaning and put your phone down now, as this brings me to my report.

The Rio Grande Valley Music Scene

The Rio Grande Valley music scene is focused around three main cities spread out across two of the four counties that make up the region: McAllen in Hidalgo County, along with Harlingen and Brownsville in Cameron County. McAllen and Brownsville are the two cities that appear on most maps of Texas, with Brownsville being the largest and the only one with a port of entry to Mexico in it. This makes it the true southernmost part of Texas.

Due to the Valley's small size and distance to other touring cities (Corpus Christi is two hours away, San Antonio is four, and Austin is five), up until maybe 10-15 years ago, we wouldn't have that many bands touring through town or conversely, as many local bands taking their show on the road. Today, touring bands of various statures make their way down multiple times per month, and return more often, building fan bases here as well as making an impact on local musicians, who in turn, take their bands more seriously and travel more to play elsewhere. This is partially due to the Internet completely changing the game in terms of scene organization, communication and the ease of spreading of one's music throughout the world via cyberspace, but also largely due to a paradigm shift in the local scene.

In the last 10-15 years, the Valley has been lucky enough to have a handful of promoters who consistently book shows at a variety of willing venue spaces and have helped establish an ongoing canon

of local music in the region. As you will see in the aforementioned documentary, prior to this current period, scenes would rise and fall in a matter of years, with the scenes that follow having absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of what came before them, prompting them to attempt to reinvent the wheel for themselves: true to the DIY ethos, but ultimately lacking in guidance and doomed to repeat the mistakes of their predecessors. Today, each of the three main cities have both prominent, deeply rooted show promoters and a host of young, aspiring musicians looking to learn and books shows they want to see in their hometown.

Cities and Venues:

In Brownsville, the longest-running show promoter is Carlos Solitaire, a scene vet who with his wife Claudia Michelle Serrano, opened up the arts space BAM (Brownsville Artists & Musicians) in the heart of the city's downtown area in 2014. Together they revived Brownsville's show-going scene, booking a healthy ratio of touring and local lineups (including acts from across the RGV in every genre imaginable), art shows, and most importantly, providing a welcoming space for the local drag community to thrive and flourish. You may have recently seen a few headlines appear on your feeds about a drag show taking place in front of the border fence to protest not just the wall but the Trump administration's violent mischaracterization of our homeland, and to raise money for the LGBTQ+ asylum seekers stuck in Tijuana awaiting their court dates. That was organized by Beatrix LeStrange, the queen at the center of the drag community that took shape within BAM's walls. Sadly, following a jam-packed LEFTOVER CRACK show that caught the attention of Brownsville's Fire Marshall, BAM was forced to close its doors at the end of 2016. However, this didn't stop Carlos from working with other venues in town to keep shows happening. He continues to book shows at clubs that can wrap their head around the idea of original live music, specifically The Broken Sprocket, Half Moon Saloon and The Kraken Lounge, and even organized a fest around these and other downtown venues last year called Vamos Pal Centro, an echo of South By Southmost, the Summer fest he would book at BAM in previous years. As someone who played both, I can confirm that the spirit of BAM is still alive and well in everything Carlos does and continues to do in the Brownsville music community.

In Harlingen, the scene is a little different, gravitating around a singular rock club called the Hop Shop, which has technically been around since the 50s but only as of the last eight years has been known as a venue that specializes in booking punk, hard rock, and the various alloys of heavy metal among other more social events such as "Bring-Your-Own-Vinyl" nights. Carlos Rojas, a seasoned skater punk and the current owner of the venue, strives to conjure a space that pays tribute to the traditional punk rock club of days long past, where anyone is welcome, and community is the goal, provided that you can hang despite the venue's more rough-around-the-edges environment. My personal estimation is that if you're looking to relive the days of punk long past, complete with near-monthly touring shows by "classic" punk groups such as MDC, The QUEERS and the reformed DEAD BOYS, the Hop Shop will welcome you with its beer-encrusted open arms.

LA RATERA

DEZORAH

McAllen, like Brownsville, has come to serve as a focal point for all of the different musics the Rio Grande Valley's scene has to offer. One venue that has quickly built a reputation for itself over the past four years is Yerberia Cultura, which follows in BAM's community-driven footsteps. The name pays homage to a cultural staple of the Rio Grande Valley's Mexican heritage and spirituality, the *Yerberia* or *Hierberia* (*'hierba'* meaning herb and *'eria'* indicating a shop of some kind) and indicates that you will find all types of culture within its doors. To this day, this has been true, but not without its own set of complications. Due to its embrace of the RGV's activist communities, open support of LGBTQ+ people, and drawing in a large audience of regulars who also support these things, the venue often draws a lot of criticism as "the hipster venue" by people in the scene (most commonly straight men who may or may not know or be an abuser of some kind) who don't share those values and unfortunately still hold some influence on parts of the RGV community. In spite of this, however, the music community that has formed around Yerberia Cultura has grown a great deal and remains an inclusive scene of artists and appreciators. One of the longest-running show promoters in McAllen is Patrick Garcia, who under the name Tigersblood.org, has booked shows in every genre you can think of, but for some reason continues to be considered the "indie" promoter of the scene. His music festivals, Galax Z Fair and Dreams, have helped even out the playing field between the RGV's musicians and touring artists they share lineups with, and has also helped introduce radical politics to a music community that may have otherwise not considered such concepts beforehand. He was once a founding owner of Yerberia Cultura and is now focusing solely on booking shows. Another show promoter that frequently books at YC is Adam Gonzalez of Valley Texas Hardcore (VTHC). He has been booking both touring and local shows for years and recently began booking a yearly hardcore festival, Valley Fest. At the moment, VTHC shows are being booked at Yerberia Cultura for the most part. Adam also runs a vegan pop-up restaurant at shows named Riff Valley's Tacos. I don't know why he named it that, but they are fucking delicious.

The only promoters in the RGV music scene who have avoided booking shows in the downtown entertainment district are Por Todos Lados, a partnership between Ronnie Rios and Omar (I don't know his last name) of hardcore trio Pussyfooter, who choose to book their shows at a small dive bar by the name of La Chula (The Cutie) that's a couple blocks away from the downtown entertainment district in McAllen. PTL doesn't book often, but when they do, they always manage to book excellent hardcore bands touring through the state. After VTHC, they're the most prominent show promoters for the hardcore scene. They've brought down bands like TOZCOS, MYSTIC INANE, EXOTICA, GLUE, WICCANS, and most recently have booked shows with RIXE and CHRONOPHAGE, so while they aren't the most active show promoters in the scene, when they book a show, they book it right.

Houses and other spaces

Outside of the aforementioned venues, some bands will often book shows of their own at various houses and ranch properties in the smaller towns of the Valley that have a significantly smaller police presence and allow for less rules. Usually these houses belong to the band members' parents or are (less often) volunteered by their peers who just want to host a show. They can be very fun and sometimes bring young bands out of the woodwork that have yet to be exposed to the overall music scene. Great for discovering something new and possibly driving home soaked from the late-night humidity.

Bands and Artists

Stylistically speaking, the most prominent scenes in the RGV at the moment (measured by activity, not size) are metal and rock; these two have lasted the longest and seen the most permutations over time. However, in terms of size and show attendance, punk and hip-hop are also thriving scenes, despite not booking in as many places and having as many active artists. Since *MRR* is a punk magazine, I'll be focusing on the punk scene here.

Though many different styles of punk are played in the RGV, the most popular genres are pop punk and hardcore.

Pop Punk:

The RGV pop-punk scene is led by three groups, FANTASTICO, The PALATINES, and RELAPSERS.

FANTASTICO have been carrying the queer punk torch in the RGV for several years now and are the most outspoken group in the punk scene about injustices at home and beyond, with band leader Esther Martinez often taking the time to articulate various issues during the band's sets as well as through their songs, which tackle everything from Esther's experiences as a queer person in the Valley to the intricacies of their interpersonal relationships.

The PALATINES are a younger group comprised both of folks who have deep roots in the Valley's punk scene as well as members who are fairly new by comparison. Their music is influenced by horror movies and the group's collective sense of humor, resulting in music that pairs razor sharp hooks with even sharper wit. Their album art and videos are often graced by appearances from their mascots: a zombie by the name of Babs, and a mischievous demon referred to only as Belzy.

RELAPSERS are a trio with a similar makeup of experiences to the PALATINES, except their style of pop punk has a darker edge to it and doesn't sound so fucking happy all the time. Their music is heavier, ruminating on the depths of the self and largely inspired by the life experiences of band leader Serge Sanchez.

Other prominent artists in the pop punk realm: RUBEN FARIAS, PARTYING!, IN STHADES, SINE CURA, KINGSWAY, FIVE FOOT FIVE, FUTURE WIVES, and GESTURE.

Hardcore:

The hardcore scene of the RGV, while always varying in size, has existed in one shape or another since the 80s. At the moment, the most prominent groups in the scene are CAT-ION, REINFORCE, AND PROGRAM.

CAT-ION are a powerful quartet of young musicians who have blazed, uncompromisingly, through the male-dominated punk scene over the past couple of years. Led by the ferocious Linda Gonzalez on vocals, the band's music fuses break-neck hardcore with burning critique of patriarchal society. As of right now, they have one demo out, which they recorded with John Morales (DAMAK, MUJERES PODRIDAS, BREAKOUT) and it's an absolutely blistering listen split over four tracks.

REINFORCE have been in the game a little longer, with members that have been involved in the punk scene for over a decade as well as members who have run the gamut of musical styles in their other groups. Their particular style of hardcore is both an assault on the senses as well as the mind. The band's recently self-released LP, *Blemish*, makes quick work of your eardrums, especially on the lead single "Disgust" which features CAT-ION's Linda Gonzalez alongside vocalist Danny Gonzalez (no relation to my knowledge) in a shattering call-and-response dynamic backed by a constant pummeling by the band. PROGRAM are the RGV's leading d-beat champions, featuring members of PORKERIA, NOBLE INSECT, and local hardcore/metal legends CONFUSED in a hardcore super group unlike any other in the scene. Their performances are easily distinguishable by vocalist Enok Vasquez's berzerker stage presence, barking about the atrocities of the world while backed by one of the tightest bands in existence. Their sound is so overwhelming, it can only be described as facing a tidal wave of noise.

Other prominent groups in the hardcore scene: WORST BEHAVIOR, NOBLE INSECT, CONFUSED, NERVE DAMAGE, SWITCHBLADE, and PURO ODIO.

Punk on the periphery:

Another aspect of the Rio Grande Valley's punk scene, like the music scene in general, is that sometimes there are groups that don't sound like anyone else but find kinship in the punk scene's open-ended nature. Artists like The OBJECTS, GLARE, La RATERA, I KILL TECHNO, and my own group, SUPER.

The OBJECTS are Brownsville's answer to post-punk. Led by Xavier Castañeda, previously of CUTTERS and IDLE VISION, the band does justice to the dark world of chorus-kissed guitars and thumping bass with damn-near mechanical precision. Their recent set opening for CHRONOPHAGE was both moving and energizing. With their first release, an as-of-yet unnamed LP, on the way, I can't help but smile at

the thought of what they have in store for the world.

GLARE, a band that walks the line between hardcore and shoegaze, is further proof that Brownsville's music scene produces some of the most unique groups in the RGV. Their latest release, a two-track single titled *Void in Blue*, shows the band at their most sonically swole. They just got off a recent Texas tour with GLITTERER.

La RATERA are a garage rock force to be reckoned with that has been booked on more punk shows than most punk bands, I think. I don't know if it's because they play as fast as punk bands do, or because they throw themselves into the music the way punk bands do, but there's never been a La RATERA set that hasn't left me absolutely floored.

I KILL TECHNO is Eric Linares' one-man project that's been in existence for longer than I can remember. At times, electro-punk madness, at other times noise-driven dirges, no matter what kind of sounds I KILL TECHNO is producing, you're guaranteed to be in for something experimental and something volatile in nature. Eric is also the sole owner and operator of Strange Valley Records, a label focusing on experimental electronic artists from the RGV.

SUPER is my band and because I'm writing this I won't say that much about it. We're named after the Neu! song, at the moment we're a quartet, and we play music that I refer to as soft punk because while it may be loud and noisy, it is also challengingly vulnerable.

Rio Grande Valley

Blistering listens and strange sounds, thank you.

The Rio Grande Valley music scene as a whole is still in the process of blooming, and despite experiencing occasional ebbs and flows, continues to move forward instead of dying out and giving up. It's like a night-blooming cactus, just when you think all the light is gone, a beautiful glowing flower will appear and remain visible until the light returns. That ever-present optimism and hunger for creation is what continues to inspire me to remain involved in the music scene. When I began to participate in 2008, I had no idea what existed down here. I had gone to shows before to see friends' bands, but I had already absorbed the same narrative of self-hatred that most young people still encounter today, especially if they grow up in a smaller town like I did, and not in one of the three main cities mentioned in this scene report (though sometimes even that doesn't make a difference). I thought the Rio Grande Valley was a void, doomed to wallow in self-parody (at the expense of one's own Mexican-American heritage, which—growing up in an assimilated household—was questionable to begin with). I felt crushed by a damning impostor syndrome among people with whom I had more in common with than I could have ever understood at the time. How fucked up is that?

I thought my only solution was to leave and find whatever I thought I was looking for elsewhere. I would have never admitted it at the time, let alone know how to go about admitting something so deeply-rooted, but what I was looking for was acceptance. I wanted to feel understood and validated while also not entirely understanding who I was and what I wanted to be. It was a fool's errand, easy. It wasn't until I started going to shows and made a few new friends (who I'm still dear friends with today) that I was able to see the next steps forward in my journey of self-discovery. It was as if an entirely new dimension had opened up to me; music became the most important thing in the world to me. The more time I spent in the scene, the more things I learned, and as I started to notice gaps, the more things I wanted to contribute. I noticed we didn't have any sort of music magazine or dedicated arts publication, so I started a music blog. Once I had done that for a few years, and found myself writing my own music, I noticed no one was playing what I was writing, so I formed a band. After a few years of that, I noticed we didn't have a proper platform to support bands that existed on the periphery of the more prominent scenes, and started a label designed to include them. No one bit, but the point was it was there in case it was needed. I ended up releasing my own music on it anyway and using the name to book shows of my own where everyone on the margins could feel included, with bands I felt the people of the RGV needed to see. Eventually I wanted the RGV to have its own radio program, putting local sounds on the same platform as international ones, sounds of all kinds, so I created one. Everything that I've done in the RGV music scene has been a gesture in return for all that it has given me. I can only imagine that everyone else who is contributing to this beautiful music community is doing it for the same if not similar reasons. My experiences in the RGV music scene made me who I am today, and I will never not be proud of that. The Rio Grande Valley and its people are a symbol of resilience and power. The land we live on used to be covered in thornbush and mesquite trees hundreds of years ago. It's never been an easy place to live in, which makes survival in it that much more of an accomplishment, especially today. I wrote this report in an attempt to recognize a portion of everything great about this place, and how it exists in spite of the cards that have been stacked against it. I believe that the world deserves to know how and why. Honestly though, I haven't even gotten started.

PIÑÉN

Piñén is a humble Hardcore Radikal band based out of Barcelona. One of those bands that works at their own pace, like sound snipers alien to fashions and trends but with very clear things in mind. Seeing them live is cathartic, pure energy in a primitive state. Without frills or makeup, only the two of them shitting on the world. Their few self-released recordings, sometimes made on recycled trash cassettes that they give away to people, are authentic sound abortions loaded with anarchist idealism, questioning the world in which we live. Above all, Piñén are two of the most pleasant, interesting, and humane people that I have ever come across in my life and I hope that this little interview conducted through cold email sometime in February 2019 will be an introduction for those who don't know them yet.

Interview and introduction by Paco Mus. Translation by Violeta Hinojosa. Photos provided by Fidel Gutierrez.

MRR: For me Piñén is a household name, but for all of those who don't know about you yet, can you tell us how and where you formed as a band?
Piñén was formed in 2013, without any intention of making a group. In 2014 they invited us to play and we agreed to do it. It is from there on that Piñén started working as a band. Our name means dirt, bodily filth, and it is a Mapudungun word, the language of the Mapuche native people.

MRR: Do you think a band as atypical as Piñén could arise anywhere else today? I think you are lucky to have grown up or spent a lot of time in a city like Barcelona, with an anarchist infrastructure and tradition that few cities have.
We do not think Piñén is that much of an atypical band—we believe there are many bands that resemble Piñén's way of doing or expressing stuff in this world. For us punk has always had a link with the libertarian world or with social criticism, and that has been our influence. We play to have fun, to vent and share ideas and ways of doing things with other people; we think that wherever there is an oppressive system, whatever it may be, there will be a need to shout and express against it. It's true that Barcelona is a city with a strong anarchist tradition, and especially a few years ago (still today, although less) punk has been closely linked to squatting, which has made all that infrastructure possible and has made things easier when it comes to organizing concerts, creating spaces where the most traditional values of this society are questioned. Many people from outside have also come here, which has enriched all this counter-culture.

"WE ARE AGAINST COMMERCIAL, PRETENTIOUS AND CAPITALIST HARDCORE"

MRR: What do you want to communicate with the band? Do you have any kind of agenda or plan? Do you think punk is a good way to convey ideas? Do you consider yourselves a Hardcore Radikal band? Tell us who else is out there doing this shit sound who we should be paying attention to.
We do not pretend anything, we do not do things with any intention, and we do not have any plans. We simply vent and scream about what we see and what oppresses us through the loud music we like. Punk has made us become what we are and question certain things or reaffirm certain ideas; we think punk is not an end for anything, but a way of escape, expression and exchange, through which links can arise way beyond music. That is the punk we want to convey.
Hardcore Radikal is the opposite of Commercial Hardcore, and yes, we are against commercial, pretentious, and capitalist hardcore. There are a lot of bands we like, especially in Latin America which is also the place that we pay more attention to. Now that we went to Mexico we met several bands that we thought were amazing and that share that punk that we talk about, bands like Chaos Days, Gritos Marginados, Fz10, Pensamiento Podrido, Violación, Mezcal Death, and many more. In Chile we also see, or at least it's what we feel here, that there is an emerging young and radikal scene, groups like Ediondo, Ignorantes, Menores Poseidos, DINA, or fanzines such as Grito Indomito or Regimen Post Dictatorial.

MRR: You told me last week that you don't want to release records again, that you think it's useless and an unnecessary expense, but you still have two records and two cassettes. At what point did you decide to stop releasing records and what were the reasons?
We believe vinyl has become very fashionable, which has made it more expensive and more elitist. Maybe it used to be those things already, but we felt different about it. It's not that we have decided not to release records ever again, but it's not the time to do so right now for us, and we prefer to make some copies on recycled cassettes and give them away. We think it's more accessible like that and it reaches people in a more personal way.

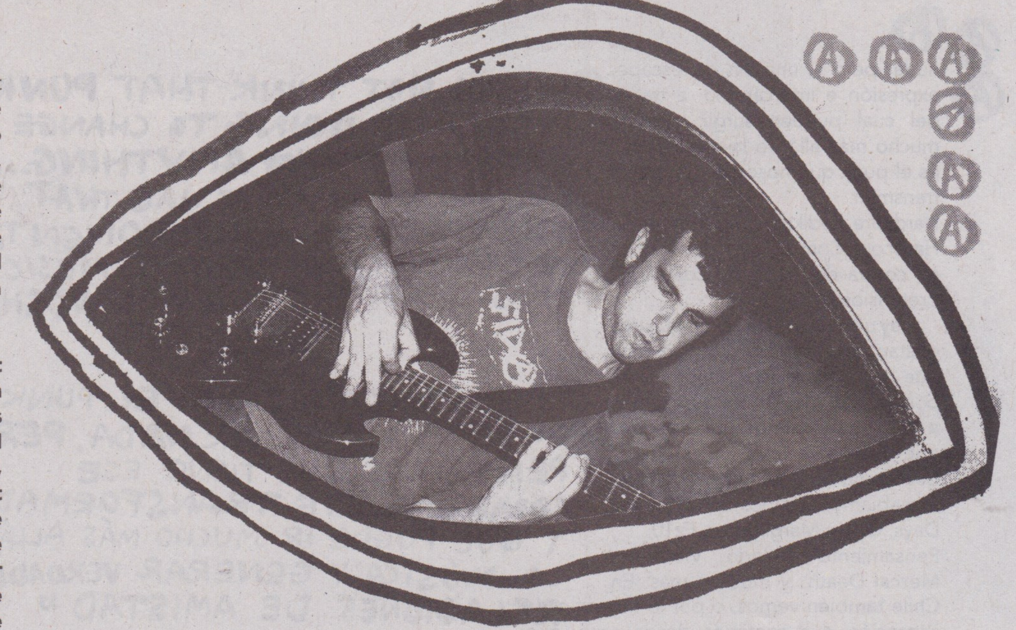
MRR: A very recurrent theme in your lyrics, as well as in the conversations we have whenever we talk, is the idea of change. How your city changes and specifically how the punk scene is not what it used to be. Sometimes I think a lot of sectors of the anarchist environment are scared of immense change and take refuge in that concept to become a ghetto. How do you see it? Do you think something is changed by playing for the same people all the time?
We don't think changes are always bad; we believe there have been positive changes. We question the changes on how to go from defending an anti-commercial and politicized way of doing things to something more aesthetic and superficial. We respect all ways of doing and understanding punk, it's just our point of view. Talking about the anarchist environment is too general in our opinion, we're a lot of people and there are very different scenes, within punk and anarchism. Piñén personally does not fear any immense change, but we wish that this change has a positive approach and that

egos and hierarchies disappear. We do not think that punk itself is going to change anything, but like we said before we do think it has that transforming component, and it can go far beyond music and create true friendships. Nor do we think that we always play for the same people, in some places in Barcelona, yes, but we have played in environments that are quite different from the traditionally punk ones.

MRR: Another topic in particular that comes more and more to my mind when I talk to people who call themselves punk or anarchist is the class issue. I believe that each day, more and more, we become individualists and only what matters to us is important, finding more and more reasons to get angry with the people around us for increasingly smaller things. I think it doesn't help that the area where I have known the most people with money and middle class ambitions is punk. Does today's punk have the ability to change something or has it become a showcase?
There are many punk scenes in the world, we have shared things with very different scenes from each other. Historically in punk there have always been these two more general sides, and it also happens in other music styles; one has a more commercial approach, which thinks about sales, tours and money (even within the "underground") and that has always been a showcase, and another one that has sought to deepen more in some ideas, forms or message: organizing or playing in benefit concerts, practicing DIY for example through self-publishing and self-production, using music to vent and share with friends... that, among other stuff, has the ability to change something in our opinion, even if it's a small change.

MRR: You recently toured North America, well, basically the West Coast of the USA and Mexico. You told me that the difference for you has been abysmal. What were your impressions?
We loved Mexico a lot and the United States not so much...but everything was very good. What we took and the best impressions we kept have been the people and groups with whom we have shared, especially Screaming Fist, Noxeema, Sacrificio, Desgrasia Jubenil, Riña, and Malcría. We send a hug to all of them!

MRR: Future plans for Piñén?
There is no future, there never was and never will be.



Piñén es una humilde banda de hardcore radikal afincada en Barcelona. Una de esas bandas que funcionan a su ritmo, como francotiradores sonoros ajenos a modas y tendencias pero con las cosas bien claras. Verlos en directo es algo catartico, pura energia en estado primitivo. Sin filigranas ni maquillaje, solo ellos dos cagandose en el mundo. Sus pocas grabaciones que se auto-editan ellos mismos, a veces en cassettes reciclados de la basura que hacen llegar a la gente gratis, son autenticos abortos sonoros cargados de idealismo anarquista y cuestionamiento del mundo en el que vivimos. Por encima de todo Piñén son dos de las personas mas agradables, interesantes y humanos que se han cruzado en mi vida y espero que esta pequeña entrevista que se hizo a través del frío email en algun momento de Febrero del 2019 sirva de presentación para los que no los conocen aun.

Entrevista y introducción por Paco Mus. Traducción por violeta hinojosa. Fotos por Fidel Gutierrez.

MRR: Piñén para mi es un nombre de estar por casa, pero para esas personas que aun no os conocen nos podéis contar como y donde os formasteis como banda?
Piñén nos formamos en el 2013, sin ninguna intención de hacer un grupo, en el 2014 nos invitaron a tocar y nos animamos. Es a partir de alli cuando Piñén empezamos a funcionar cómo banda. Nuestro nombre significa mugre, suciedad corporal, y es una palabra mapudungun, el idioma del pueblo originario mapuche.

MRR: Crees que seria posible que una banda tan atípica como Piñén pudiera surgir en cualquier otro sitio a día de hoy? Creo que soys afortunados de haber crecido o pasado mucho tiempo en una ciudad como Barcelona con una infraestructura y una tradición anarquista que pocas ciudades tienen.
No pensamos que Piñén sea una banda tan atípica, creemos que en el mundo hay muchos grupos que se parecen en la forma de hacer o expresarse de Piñén, para nosotrxs el punk siempre ha tenido un vinculo con el mundo libertario o con la critica social, y esa ha sido nuestra influencia. Nosotrxs tocamos para pasarlo bien, desahogarnos y compartir unas ideas y formas de hacer con otras personas, pensamos que en cualquier parte dónde haya un sistema opresor, sea cómo sea, habrá necesidad de gritar y expresarse contra ello.
Es cierto que Barcelona es una ciudad con una fuerte tradición anarquista, y sobretodo hace unos años (todavia hoy, aunque menos) el punk ha estado muy ligado a la okupacion, cosa que ha hecho que haya toda esa infraestructura y facilitar las cosas, a la hora de montar conciertos, crear espacios donde se cuestionan los valores más tradicionales de esta sociedad... Tambien ha venido mucha gente de fuera, cosa que ha enriquecido toda esta contra-cultura.

"ESTAMOS EN CONTRA DEL HARDCORE COMERCIAL PRETENSIOSO Y CAPITALISTA"

MRR: Que quereis comunicar con la banda. Tenéis alguna tipo de agenda o plan, creeis que el punk es un buen medio para transmitir ideas? Os considerais una banda de Hardcore Radikal, contarnos quien mas hay ahi fuera haciendo esta mierda sonora a quien deberiamos prestar atención.
Nosotrxs no pretendemos nada, no hacemos las cosas con ninguna intención y no tenemos ningun plan. Simplemente nos desahogarnos y gritamos lo que vemos y nos oprime a través de la música ruidosa que nos gusta. El punk a nosotrxs nos ha hecho ser como somos y cuestionarnos ciertas cosas o reafirmarnos en ciertas ideas, pensamos que el punk no es un fin para

nada, pero sí una via de escape, expresión e intercambio, a través del cual pueden surgir vinculos mucho más allá de la música. Ese es el punk que nosotrxs queremos transmitir.
Hardcore Radikal es lo contrario a Hardcore Comercial, y si, estamos en contra del hardcore comercial, pretensioso y capitalista.

Hay un montón de grupo que nos gustan, sobretodo en Latioamerica que es tambien donde más ponemos el ojo. Ahora que fuimos a Mexico conocimos varias bandas que nos parecieron increibles y que comparten ese punk del que te hablamos, grupos como Chaos Days, Gritos Marginados, Fz10 Pensamiento Podrido, Violación, Mezcal Death...y muchos más. En Chile también vemos, o por lo menos es la sensación que sentimos desde aquí, que hay una escena emergente joven y radikal, grupos como Ediondo, Ignorantes, Menores Poseidos, DINA...o fanzines como Grito Indomito o Regimen Post Dictatorial.

"WE DO NOT THINK THAT PUNK ITSELF IS GOING TO CHANGE ~~ANYTHING ANYTHING~~ ANYTHING... BUT WE DO THINK IT HAS THAT TRANSFORMING COMPONENT... IT CAN GO FAR BEYOND MUSIC AND CREATE TRUE FRIENDSHIP"

"NO PENSAMOS QUE EL PUNK EN SI VAYA A CAMBIAR NADA, PERO PENSAMOS QUE TIENE ESE COMPONENTE TRANSFORMADOR Y QUE PUEDE IR MUCHO MÁS ALLÁ DE LA MÚSICA Y GENERAR VERDADERAS RELACIONES DE AMISTAD"

MRR: Me comentabais la semana pasada que no quereis volver a sacar discos, que pensáis que es inútil y un gasto innecesario, pero aun así tenéis dos discos y dos casetes. En que momento decidisteis dejar de editar discos y cuales fueron las razones?
Creemos que el vinilo se ha vuelto muy de moda, ha hecho que se encarezca y sea cada vez más elitista. Quizás antes ya lo era, pero lo sentiamos de otra forma. No es que hayamos decidido no sacar discos nunca más, pero para nosotrxs ahora no es el momento y preferimos hacer unas copias en cassettes reciclados y regalarlas por alli, creemos que es más accesible de esta manera y llega a la gente de una manera más personal.
MRR: Un tema muy recurrente en vuestras letras, así como en las conversaciones que tenemos siempre que hablamos es la idea de el cambio. De como vuestra ciudad cambia y en concreto la escena punk no es lo que era. A veces pienso que muchos sectores del ambiente anarquista tienen un miedo al cambio inmenso y se refugian en ese concepto para convertirse en un gueto. Como lo veis vosotros?
Creeis que se cambia algo tocando para la misma gente siempre?
No pensamos que los cambios sean siempre malos, creemos que ha habido cambios positivos. Nosotrxs cuestionamos los cambios cómo pasar de defender una forma de hacer anticomercial y politizada a algo más estético y superficial. Respetamos cualquier forma de hacer y tomarse el punk, es sólo nuestro punto de vista. Hablar de ambiente anarquista pensamos que es generalizar demasiado, somos mucha gente y hay escenas muy diferentes, dentro del punk y del anarquismo. Piñén peronalmente no teme a ningun cambio inmenso, pero deseamos que este cambio tenga un enfoque positivo y en que desaparezcan los egos y jerarquias.No pensamos que el punk en sí vaya a cambiar nada, pero cómo hemos dicho antes sí que pensamos que tiene ese componente transformador, y que puede ir mucho más allá de la música y generar verdaderas relaciones de amistad.
Tampoco pensamos que toquemos siempre para la misma gente, en algunos sitios de Barcelona si, pero hemos tocado en ambientes muy distintos que a los tradicionalmente punks.

MRR: Otro tema en particular que me viene cada vez mas a la cabeza cuando hablo con gente que se auto denomina punk o anarquista es el tema de clase. Creo que cada día mas nos convertimos en individualidades para las cuales solo importa lo que a nosotros nos importe, encontrando cada vez mas razones para enfadarnos con la gente de nuestro alrededor por cosas cada vez mas minúsculas. Creo que no ayuda que el sitio donde mas gente con pasta y con aspiraciones de clase media he conocido sea el punk. Tiene el punk a día de hoy capacidad de cambiar algo o se ha convertido en un escaparate?
Hay muchas escenas punk en el mundo, nosotrxs hemos compartido con escenas muy distintas unas de otras. Historicamente en el punk siempre ha habido estas dos vertientes más generales, y tambien ocurre en otros estilos de música; uno tiene un enfoque más comercial, pensando en ventas, giras y dinero (incluso dentro del "underground") y que siempre ha sido un`escaparate, y otro que ha buscado profundizar más en unas ideas, formas o mensaje: montando o tocando en conciertos beneficos, poniendo en practica el DIY por ejemplo a través de la autoedición y autoproducción, utilizando la música para desahogarse y compartir con amigxs...eso, junto con otras cosas, creemos que puede tener la capacidad para cambiar algo, aunque sea un cambio pequeño.

MRR: Hace poco habéis hecho una gira por Norte America, bueno básicamente la costa Oeste de USA y Mexico, me comentabais que la diferencia para vosotros ha sido abismal. Que impresiones os habéis traído?
Mexico nos ha molado mucho y Estados Unidos no tanto....jajaja, pero muy bien todo.
Lo que rescatamos y las mejores impresiones que nos hemos traido han sido las personas y los grupos con los que hemos compartido, especialmente Screaming Fist, Noxeema, Sacrificio, Desgrasia Jubenil, Riña y Malcria. Un abrazo para todxs ellxs!

MRR: Planes futuros para Piñén?
No hay futuro, nunca lo hubo y nunca lo habrá.

SIX TWO FIVE

AN ODE TO MRR

In 1984 I bought my first MRR at Kepler's Books in Stanford California, and my life was forever changed. Every month, I read of new bands (and sent away for their demos); I scoured the review section, learning about bands from across the world from the reviews of Tim, Martin, Walter G, et al., discovering bands that I still listen to today. I would hold up a cassette recorder to the radio speakers, recording the MRR Radio show to hear the new international bands "Tim and the gang" introduced, studying the tape for weeks afterwards to learn the names of bands, and trying to figure out how I could hear more. Along with BCT tapes, MRR taught me that there were small scenes throughout the world that shared the same politics and appreciation for angry fast thrash: for example, LARM and NEGAZIONE, MOB 47 and PROTES BENGT, RUIDO DE RABIA and HHH, BRAIN DEATH, SxOxB, and CHICKEN BOWELS, and closer to home, STIKKY, STARK RAVING MAD, STRAIGHT AHEAD... the list goes on. And much later, when Tim needed a reviewer who could stomach lo-fi thrash and grind, I jumped at the chance to be a "shitworker," if only, to pay back my debt to something that had given me, and all of us, so much.

More importantly, Tim held true to his politics and called out a lot of shady shit that supposed "punks" were doing, from shitty "business" practices, regressions into nationalism, or for sexual abuse. Along with Kent and Lisa at Ebullition, I can't think of anyone else who has shaped my politics and ethics more than Tim, and those that have kept those ethics alive. It's amazing that MRR lasted in print edition for as long as it did, which is a testament to the dedication and hardwork of the editors/shitworkers. So thank you, to Tim, Martin, and everyone who has been involved in MRR over the years for everything. The print edition may end, but the pissed off, righteous, punk spirit you gave life to lives on.

Wholesale and Mailorder:
WWW.EBULLITION.COM
FOR WEEKLY UPDATES CHECK:
WWW.625THRASH.COM

"Into the Depths" reflects the bands rage and protest against a world that has turned its back on itself. This album marks these Minneapolis punks 10 year anniversary and is nothing short of thrash infused punk fury!

"Just when you thought that crust punk couldn't get any better, there's a band like WAR//PLAGUE that constantly sets the new standards for the genre." - DIY Conspiracy

U.S. ORDERS - organizeandarise.bigcartel.com
OVERSEAS ORDERS - phobiarecords.net

ORGANIZE AND ARISE
PUNK IS PROTEST
PHOBIA
RIP MRR

Chronophage is a unique-sounding band. Their songs all have their own style, so their influences are hard to pin down—part freak punk à la the Meat Puppets, part UKDIY avant-pop, part VU-influenced lo-fi rock, part outsider folk. This interview was done only days before going to print. I didn't know enough about the band, so in an attempt to ask relevant questions, I quickly read everything I could find, which mainly consisted of a short interview for an art magazine printed on the insert of their LP. It was inspiring, and as I finished reading, I concluded the Chronophage members probably were some Sun Ra / Tarkosvky / László Krasznahorkai "spiritual" types, so I wrote my questions accordingly. As it turns out, the aforementioned interview was made up, and I was in fact dealing with down-to-earth yet playful punks. It seems we all ended up a bit more confused after our exchanges, which isn't a bad thing in my book. After sending me their replies, Parker added that the aforementioned 'art interview' was in fact "serious, but just maybe a little exaggerated. The themes and sentiments expressed in it are definitely honest in as much as I regard the band. Some of the questions you asked caught us very much off guard, and I think we all appreciated how they make us consider what we do and how it connects with our everyday lives."

Introduction and interview by Alex Simon. Photo provided by the band.
Chronophage is Sarah, Parker, Cody, and Casey.

MRR: I first heard about Chronophage in Erika Elizabeth's MRR column. I don't remember her exact description, but it made me check out the band. I liked what I heard—it was raw and intriguing and, most importantly, didn't seem to fit in. Do you see a relationship between the way your music sounds (that is, if you agree it sounds raw, intriguing, and that it doesn't fit in) and the way you are as individuals?
Sarah: I'd agree there is a relationship between who we are and our music. We're all sensitive, honest, open-hearted individuals.

MRR: When you started Chronophage, was there a conscious decision to play music that was "uncommon" in a given context (your city, the punk scene, the local music scene, etc.)?
Sarah: In Chronophage we try to play music we like. I remember moving to Austin and being really impressed with the local punk scene and bands participating in surrounding cities like Houston and Denton. Parker and I had recorded What is the Mystery of Love? before we really knew anyone in town to share it with. It wasn't until meeting Cody and playing live together that our sound really started to form into what it is now. I think our music is highly reactive to our current interests, friends, and surroundings. Fortunately, Austin's punk scene is very accepting of mixed bills and DIY tendencies.

MRR: The next thing I heard about Chronophage was at a Patsy gig in Lyon, France. Candice Metrailer, who sings in that band, told me she was gonna release your LP. When she mentioned the band name, she was surprised I knew about it. She spoke highly of your music and of you as a band. What's your relationship with her in a musical sense? How did you all meet?
Sarah: Candice booked our first show! I've always thought she was insanely talented and Blue Dolphin remains one of my favorite Texas bands. Her bass parts have a lot to do with that.
Cody: Candice and I met on tour some years ago and ended up dating for a while from there, in which time we played in bands CCTV and Blue Dolphin together while living in Chicago and then Austin, respectively.
Parker: Candice has both helped us a lot as a band and has been a great friend. I feel lucky to have met her. And her new band Groove Domestic Product is great.

MRR: Online "rock critics" mention the most obscure bands when it comes to Chronophage. I mean, I hadn't even heard of Human Switchboard, Digital Dinosaurs, 'O' Level, Girl Ray, Flying Calvittos, and Thin Yoghurts before some crazy music nerds casually dropped those names when trying to pin down your sound. Do you even know these bands? What about the other more famous ones you've been compared to? Swell Maps, early Pavement, Velvets circa the third album, TV Personalities...Do you listen to them? Do you want to sound like them?
Sarah: Nope, just the more famous ones! I feel rather than wanting to sound like a particular group, I find myself getting into the practices and methods of the artists I like and that's what guides my own practice and experimentation with music. It's the same for visual artist and writers I like too. I do love the Velvet Underground.
Parker: I like it when people compare us to Swell Maps. As a side note it is a perennial mindblower for me how much music has been recorded since technology made that possible. And the ways in which forgotten recordings become popular again (or valuable again). Can't express what I'm thinking, but I hope our music is listened to and enjoyed solely while we are all involved in making and disseminating it, and if we ever decide to hang it up that people lay our music aside and focus on the other people that are making things then.
Cody: I'm always really flattered whenever people draw a comparison to the Velvets because I think I can speak for all of us when I say that's a huge influence on us and one of my favorite bands. However, I really enjoy most of the above mentioned bands but don't necessarily see the comparison, but I like that our sound is enough to make different people hear such a variety of sounds and influences when they hear us.

MRR: Could you play in a band whose main purpose was to sound as close as possible like another one?
Casey: Music for me is just expression. I think that starting a band with the intent to sound like another band is pretty weird though.
Sarah: Nah. Maybe if it was a Neil Young and Crazy Horse cover band.
Parker: We are not capable of making conscious decisions so it's not fair to entertain that possibility. I would die to play in a band like the Rolling Stones or Can, but it's impossible.

MRR: It seems that every member of Chronophage sings at some point. Right? Could you tell me about the way you write songs as a collective?
Parker: Sarah and I have been the only singers so far, but that could always change. One thing we've really enjoyed is having our friends sit in with us at shows, adding second guitar or other and more arcane instrumentation. I'm sure we'll have others sing. As for the music, I've brought in most of the germinal ideas from things I do when messing on the guitar, then we all figure it out from there.

MRR: Some excerpts from an unpublished Chronophage interview are included in your LP. From what I get, this was an interview with an art magazine. What's the story? Why was it unpublished?
Parker: That was just a fun little thing to put in the album insert so people have something to read. I wrote it myself as an experiment to see how pretentious I can be, which, as you can tell, is super duper.

MRR: I'm gonna quote that interview: "No, no, no, our music couldn't approach the realm of craft, because there was no labor put into it, no cleaving carving or hacking, and no revision at all. Every song we've played, including those we've yet to play, are improvisatory prayers dedicated in equal amounts to the suffrage of worn-down souls and our personal satisfaction and attractiveness." Could you tell me more about that "labor" aspect you were talking about? Why isn't Chronophage "labor"? It's interesting to me that you don't seem to view your music as "work," but as "improvisatory prayers." Nowadays, so many punk bands seem to see themselves as small businesses or companies, with digital marketing strategies and all that sort of things, which is a very American and very neoliberal thing to do.
Parker: I hate work, so it's not labor! And we all hate the silly culture of businesses and ownership and whining about popularity and profit, so we couldn't ever orient this project to fit that model. Though we could be corrupted because we love piles and piles of money!

MRR: Why use the word "prayer" in the aforementioned quote? I often complain about bands lacking "souls," so I can kinda relate, but I'd like to know your take on that word.
Parker: Going on some sorta Temple ov Psychick Youth, toe-tipping fake spiritualism, but it's just a joke!

MRR: In that same interview, you write, "We are slim and still must search bonebreakingly for what glib people pawn off as a meaning (we weep at the grave of that word), or more specifically a way of life that is celebrated within a community, that is free of capitalist clock-ins, of state borders, and of racial, gender, and class discrimination. But that seems now to be not of this world, so we are meaningless, our actions worthless, and we laugh at the notion that music, beautiful as it is, could ever truthfully accompany an idea or meaning." To me, this sounds down-to-earth in a strange way—idealistic and pessimistic at the same time.
Parker: I would hope our music could be actualized towards a

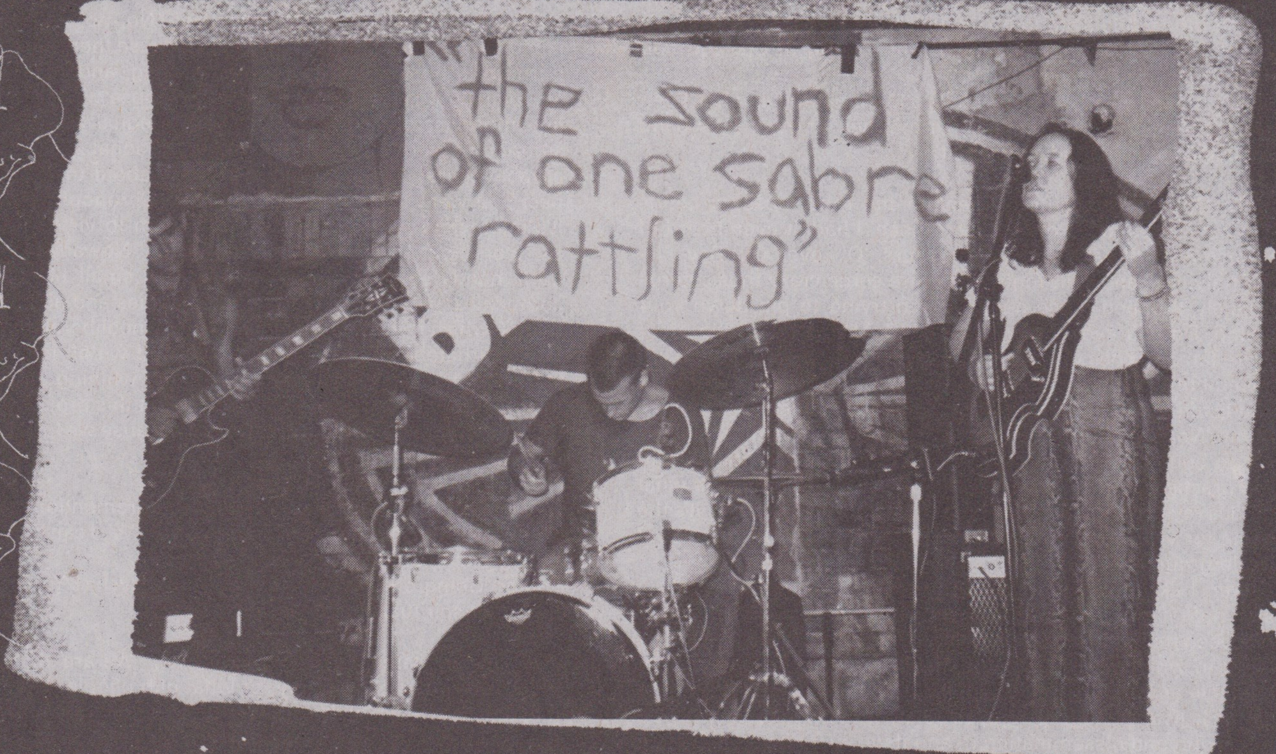
more just purpose, and I really wouldn't like to emphasize any pessimism that might be found in our songs. But it pales next to the people that work hard and substantively towards happy change in communities. I think we are all glad to play music with each other as we love each other and, in the ultimate analysis, it is a way for us to spend more time together, to meet other people, and to learn more about the world.

MRR: I haven't seen many pictures or videos of Chronophage. When I did, the settings were always intriguing and colorful. What kind of places do you most like playing gigs?
Sarah: I've always had fun at DIY venues. I think it's interesting when we play in restaurants, galleries, or shops to see the transformation of space and its use. I would really love to play in a garden or train station!
Cody: I feel like we've had the fortune of playing at a lot of different places that we wouldn't have the privilege to play in other bands with Chronophage. Just different galleries, styles of DIY venues, etc.

MRR: What's it like living in the city of SXSW?
Sarah: The whole city becomes very expensive and hard to navigate. This will be our second year participating in SXSW. We are mostly involved in our friends' showcases that are less publicized and DIY.
Parker: We are trying to downplay the fact that we are going to play SXSW because the whole event is corny and obviously a money thing, an excuse to sell beer. Though it unfortunately includes us, any band that associates itself with that whole business loses all its credibility as a band that can be concerned with Marxism, anarchism, or community-based music. We are doing it as a ploy to make money, which undoubtedly will not work. One cool thing though: apparently if major indie label A&R interns gaze back upon the city as they are returning to their bigtime abode, they will turn into a pillar of cocaine, which I hope to witness this year and sell their fashionable narcotic remains to children. Yes, that is what we'll do.
Cody: Living in Austin during SXSW is a nightmare. Your only choices as a resident are to leave or find ways to exploit it or use it to your advantage financially. If you play music, then chances are you get on some show, flip your artist wristbands on Craigslist, and pay your rent. Otherwise you're probably stuck barbacking for fifteen hours a day or something equally punishing.

MRR: Could you tell me about the "Keep Austin Weird" movement? I haven't heard much about it, but the name sounds interesting.
Casey: I think it's just a dumb marketing tactic. It has nothing to do with us or anyone we're involved with.
Cody: Yeah it's just a slogan for bumper stickers and tie-dyed shirts sported by rich old hippies trying to salvage the romantic idea of Austin "back in the day."

MRR: Thanks for taking the time to reply. Since this is the last print issue of MRR, what would you like to say to its readers and shitworkers?
Sarah: Thank you Alex and MRR for including us in the magazine. Big shoutout to Miranda Fisher! I love you!
Parker: Love you Miranda. Thank you to MRR for printing this and thanks Alex. Quick shoutout to Jake Cloud. Please write us at 5600 Ledesma Rd., Austin, TX 78721, but only before August as we have to move then.
Cody: Thanks for all the beautiful memories and hospitality at the MRR house, and y'all's tireless work preserving punk history.



Chronophage's debut LP "Prolog for Tomorrow" is available at cletapatrarecords.bandcamp.com.
Out now on Cleta-Patra in the US (LP version) and Cool Marriage in Europe (cassette version).

Chronophage will be touring the Midwest and East Coast of the USA in May 2019

SIDETRACKED
Hollowed Out LP
- WA fast HC

SEX PRISONER
HARM DONE
split LP
- AZ pv meets French angry metal HC

TIRED OF EVERYTHING
Silenced CS
- Raleigh ripping HC punk so good

MARXBROS
TRAVØLTA
split LP
- mem. Lärm & Spazz mets Belgian HC

TERMINAL NATION
neckbeard deathcamp
split EP
- political powerviolence v. antifa black metal

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH
Forbidden Techniques LP
- Idaho fastcore

REALIZE
Demolition LP
- industrial ala Godflesh

SIXBREWBANTHA
Blight LP
- Canadian grindcore master champions

Beyond Pain
Humans Are Actual Pain CS
- misanthropic grindcore mem. Despise You

GLUE TRAPS
Future Shocks EP
- Baltimore hc punk mem. Deep Sleep

get your fix of angry music at
TO LIVE A LIE

JAP SUP LTD.

NEW LABEL FOR JAPANESE PUNK/HARDCORE
-SMALL LIMITED PRESSINGS ONLY-

JAP-001 FORWARD - FUTURE TROOPS 12"LP
(EUROPEAN PRESSING, 12 SONGS VERSION, 200 COPIES)

JAP-002 WARHEAD - NEW 7"
(EUROPEAN TOUR VERSION OF THEIR NEW 7", 100 COPIES)

JAP-003 RYUKETSU BLIZZARD 7"EP
"CHAOS FROM NISHINARI MOTOR CITY"
(EUROPEAN TOUR SPECIAL, 100 COPIES)

JAPAN SUPPORT LIMITED

WWW.JAPSUP.LTD
JAPSUPLTD@GMAIL.COM

NERVOUS INTENT RECORDS

DRAMA: DEBUT LP
Coming late summer 2019! Bay area force-of-nature punks DRAMA are releasing their debut LP on Nervous Intent! Power minimalism with a deep freak soul; like no one else. FFO: Pylon, The Bags, Spitboy

STREET EATERS: INHABITATIONS OF TIME
Limited to 100 tapes! This experimental, noisy ambient instrumental companion piece to *The Envoy* LP is guaranteed to haunt yr dreams FFO: Can, the *Dead Man* soundtrack, Laurie Anderson, Wire

KENNY KENNY OH OH: I WILL NOT NEGOTIATE
Powerful, raw, political femme action PUNK from Leipzig! Tape of the new album (vinyl on Contraszt!/Emancypunx).FFO: Kamikatze, Mülheim Asozial, Toži Babe, A-Heads

STREET EATERS: THE ENVOY
A few copies left! 3rd LP from Oakland/ Berkeley truewave punks! Saturated, noisy postpunk concept album inspired by radical antiauthoritarian, gender revolutionary, dystopian author Ursula K. LeGuin For Fans Of: Masshysteri, Wipers, Burning Kitchen, Savages

CROOKED BANGS: II
2nd LP from these Austin-based freak-punk destroyers! Noisy, smoky noir wavepunk, French/English lyrics, fabulously negative. FFO: Babes In Toyland, Rudimentary Peni, Lost Sounds, Melvins.

NERVOUSINTENT.COM

DEAD AIR

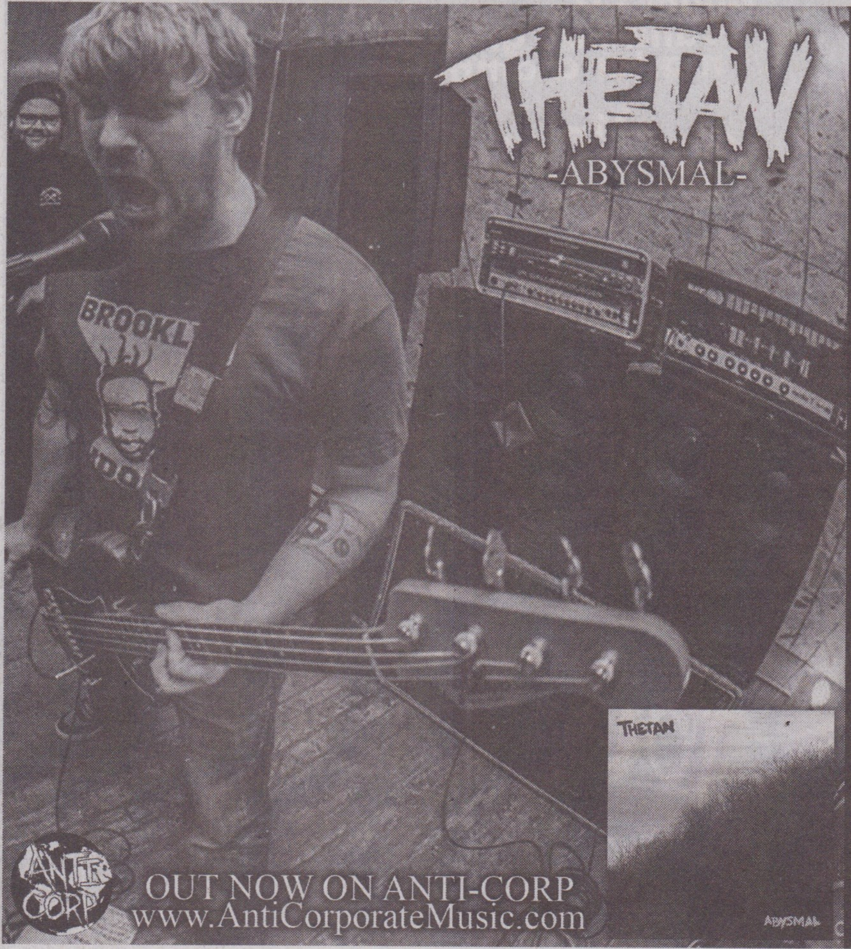
MASTERING
PUNK & HARDCORE
FOR AFFORDABLE RATES
(& GARAGE / NOISE / POP / GRIND / EMO / METAL / INDIE / ETC)

(BY TOTAL LENGTH OF MATERIAL)

0 - 5 Minutes = $35
5 - 10 Minutes = $50
10 - 15 Minutes = $65
15 - 20 Minutes = $80
20 - 25 Minutes = $95
25 - 30 Minutes = $110
30 - 35 Minutes = $125
35 - 40 Minutes = $140
40 - 45 Minutes = $155
45 - 50 Minutes = $170

(Vinyl Master add $10 // Splits add $10)

WWW.DEADAIRSTUDIOS.COM
WILL@DEADAIRSTUDIOS.COM



black·matter

·M·A·S·T·E·R·I·N·G·

NO GODS / YES MASTERS

MIXING
MASTERING
ETCHED VINYL

www.blackmattermastering.com

PROVOKE

IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD THE CHANCE TO SEE PROVOKE LIVE, YOU KNOW THE FURY AND RAGE THEY PACK. I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING AN AMAZING CONVERSATION WITH JENNY, HECTOR, DANNY, AND MOSES IN THEIR HOMETOWN OF OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA. TOGETHER WE HAD A DISCUSSION ABOUT PUNK, INCLUSION, RECLAIMING SPACE, SAFETY AT SHOWS, BEING FROM OAKLAND, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO HOLD SPACE FOR ONE ANOTHER AS A FRIENDS, BANDMATES, AND AS A COMMUNITY. AS PROVOKE PUSHES THROUGH 2019 THEY PLAN TO TRAVEL TO THE EAST COAST IN JULY AND SELF-RELEASE THEIR FIRST 7".

INTERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION BY RAMY SILYAN. PHOTOS BY RAMY SILYAN AND ROB COONS.

MRR: Is Provoke the first band for some of you?

Jenny: It's my first band.

Moses: Jenny and I are like brother and sister. I've always been wanting to create with her.

Jenny: I joked about it to begin with. I was like, "Oh, maybe I'll do vocals one day." My brother was in a band when we were in high school and I wanted to be in it with him, but he was like, "No way." So I made the joke with Moses, and Moses was like, "No, for reals! Do you want to do it?" Daniel, who was playing guitar at that time, was moving to Berlin, and Hector really wanted to get back on the guitar. They were like, "Okay, let's fuckin' try it with you in there." And we did. I was really nervous, but I think it's working out [laughter].

Hector: We were all pretty nervous but also excited. I even got it from some people, like, "Well why don't you guys start a new band?" I feel strongly about these songs. We're not done with this project, especially because we started this band having in mind that we wanted it to be all people of color to represent. It made perfect sense for the band to add another perspective. I really liked writing songs on guitar, and it made me feel very excited to transition because I run out of energy quickly, and trying to front the band was...I felt like I was letting people down, to be honest. The energy she brought was insane.

Jenny: The lyrics that Hector wrote made it easier for me to transition into the band because they're powerful. It allowed me to connect. It made my direction for writing lyrics easier.

Danny: I think it was very intentional. Intention is one of the driving forces for our band. We usually check in with each other every couple of months, like, "Hey, are we still in the band for the right reasons? Are we still friends first and foremost?" And then use the band as a way to share our message. With the transition between guitar players and vocalists, we wanted to give Daniel a good send-off. You know how bands will switch members and then they play a show and you're like, "Oh, is this the same band?" We wanted to be like, "Okay, we're the same band, like there's no bad blood. Things just happen, people just move on." Daniel was literally gonna move to another country and start a different part of his life, and we wanted to start a different part of Provoke's life.i

Moses: We wanted to be transparent with each other and everyone else. It's all love. We were sad that Daniel was leaving, but we were stoked for him. And we were extremely happy to bring Jenny into the family.

MRR: You guys brought up a couple of things that I think are dope. You know, the intentionality of the band, of wanting it to be all POC. Do you guys want to talk a little bit about intentionality beyond what you've already expressed? Is there a narrative that you guys are pushing, from a group perspective or an individual perspective?

Hector: Being in front of people to be able to talk about the things that we're upset about or really excited about or that make us feel insecure. Being able to hopefully get people excited to start their own band.

Moses: Growing up I would maybe see two brown dudes playing music. That was Tony in No Doubt and the homie from Sum 41 [laughter]. One time I was on tour and we got pulled over by a cop and he was like, "What are you guys doing from California?" And I was like, "We're a band," and before I could finish my sentence he was like, "Oh, I know Sum 41." And I was just like, damn, that's how limited people's outlook was. I think it's cool because some kids might see our band that have never seen marginalized people making music. It's inspirational. It's like, yeah, we're the same as you, have a similar upbringing, you guys can do this also. For the longest time all the shows I went to weren't people like me or like us.

Danny: I think a lot of us grew up in punk and radical communities. At a young age, you see shows, and I didn't register, "Oh, damn dude, I'm like one of three brown people." And for the most part, I'm the only Vietnamese person at shows right now. I didn't register that until I got a little bit older. I started reading more, and people started bringing up these topics of being inclusive and visible. I think it got to a head when Moses wanted to start an all-POC band. It's like, "Why are we even doing this band in the first place?" Yeah, it's fun, it's cool to make music, but it's a way for us to share our experiences, share our insecurities, not just with each other but with whoever wants to listen. Now we're actually carving that space out.

Especially in the Bay Area, when we started around 2015, we were already well into fuckin' gentrification out here, with people moving in and taking up resources. No, fuck that! We're gonna take our space. And in a place like punk and hardcore in the Bay Area, especially the hardcore end of it, it's just like, nah dude, I don't wanna see another shaved head white dude. We're just done with it. It's time to put our voice out there.

Moses: Yeah, that shit gave us the framework that we're at. Like, no shade or hate towards those things. But at the end of the day, you want to represent your experiences. The best way we can do that is with people that share those experiences. It's easier to make music with people who are similar to me, because there's less to explain and there's just more genuine love for each other. Whereas I think in bands in my past—and I'm a drummer so this is a bias—it's harder to get your voice out there because of the different backgrounds. And in this band I feel for the first time in my whole life that I have an even say in what we talk about.

JENNIFER QUINTANILLA // VOCALS

Jenny: I don't have a background of being raised in hardcore. I started listening to hardcore for the first time a couple of years ago. I like the sound, I like the feeling of it. But when I see white dudes doing it, something's not right. I feel like I've been able to adopt it more because it makes more sense coming out of me visually and when you're listening to it. I'm fucking angry. I have many reasons to be angry. I don't connect to a white guy screaming about something. Like what are you screaming about? Probably not much.

Danny: There's no one right way to be into punk, or into radical community. Your history makes you who you are, and the fact that you found yourself ending up here in this time and space, it doesn't matter if you didn't get into punk until later on in your life. That shit doesn't matter as long as you feel it and you have that desire to change something or make your voice heard.

Moses: We can all show up to shows, we can all act pissed off, we can all mosh, we can all say whatever the fuck we want on the microphone, but when you're on that BART train or you're at the grocery store and you see some shit happen, what are you actually doing? It is a lifestyle, and I think a lot of people don't live that lifestyle. Every so often, we check ourselves because I think as a band you can also kind of get caught up in the shit. Many times have we been like, "Wait, let's peel back. Should we be doing that show? Why are we doing this?" We've gotta check ourselves all the time.

Danny: Because we gotta live with it.

Hector: Yeah, because we get excited sometimes when we get asked to play shows. But then we're like, wait, how are we using this platform? How is this going to affect the type of change we're trying to make? Sometimes we get a little bit starstruck, you know? But it's like, this is bigger than my personal taste. We always have to check in with each other.

Danny: Dude, it's walking the walk. We've had to check ourselves and Jenny does a really great job of making us think about these questions like, yo, what are the bands that we're playing with? Who are these people in these bands? What do they represent? What's the venue that we're playing at, what do they represent? And is that something that is in line with what we want our band to be, or who we are individually too?

Moses: We should all be thinking radically and questioning everything and I think most people don't. When we challenge everything, that turns out for better outcomes.

MRR: There's the general status quo but then there's the status quo of punk, this community that we all work within and we're individually a part of and add to. Why are people not asking these same questions, and do you see a correlation between being an all-POC band and asking those questions?

Moses: I think people aren't asking those questions because it's fucking hard. I will tell you, in this band it is fucking hard to ask myself these questions, and I don't even do it. They ask me questions, and I have to swallow my pride and be like, "They're right, I'm wrong. This is bigger." And that's why people don't do it, because it's easy to do the status quo, but when you actually sit down with four individuals, it's difficult. We've been in tears together in a room and gotten through the fuckin' conversation, not practiced at all and just talked, and came out the other side and been like, "I'm so glad we talked. We're all on the same page. Thank you for bringing that up." And at the beginning of that conversation I was just heartbroken. It's difficult.

Jenny: For me, it's a little bit easier because I don't come from a musical background, I wasn't in high school listening to these bands or whatever, so it's easy for me to detach from it and look at the bigger picture. But I think it is a hard thing if you've been deep into something and you have been overlooking a lot of things for many years, you know, how white supremacy has played a role in punk and hardcore. And how you may have not noticed it, even if you were a person of color, the only brown or Black person in the crowd surrounded by white people. You just accept it at that point because that was the only thing you could do, because everyone around you was accepting it for so long.

Danny: It's normalized.

Jenny: It's normalized. Years and years of people claiming this is hardcore or this is punk and not actually looking at the bigger picture. Why is there just all white people in this crowd? Why is punk just really like a white, patriarchal mentality? I think people have been behind that curtain for a long time, and they don't ask those questions. It's easier not to.

Danny: You're already an outcast in society, so now you found a subculture. It's like, "Well, I'll let this slide because at least you know, we're kind of the same." And then it's like, I don't want to be cast out from this group [laughter].

Moses: Social capital, dude. That's what it comes down to.

MRR: Do you all see a correlation with complacency in whiteness because all-white bands or majority-white bands are playing for bigger majority-white audiences? I guess we're coming back to that intentionality, right? Why are POC bands more intentional than other bands? That's been my outside looking in and that's been my experience in bands. Check me, maybe I'm wrong.

Danny: I think it's usually the people who are oppressed who have to take up that mantle. Oh, this punk band's coming through, even though they are sus as fuck but they're a big name band. That's what you do. It's always been up to the people who are oppressed to bring that to light, to tear down those walls. In radical communities, you have to carve out that space, you know? We can try as much as we can to go into mainstream culture and fuck that shit up, but right now this is within our reach. This is our community, the people that we're close with. Who we decide to book in this area, who we want to support. Unfortunately it's always up to POC bands and women to take that up.

Moses: We're learning too, you know? We're just trying and questioning things and figuring things out for ourselves.

Hector: We try to have conversations. Sometimes it comes down to, "Alright, we're not going to play this." Actually, as threatening as this type of show might be, why don't we choose this as a punk forum to address this all-white crowd that would have otherwise not even checked us out? It's like, what if it's good for us to be in this thing? But then we always take a step back. It's not our responsibility.

Moses: We don't want to put ourselves in uncomfortable places.

Jenny: My thing is, I don't feel safe.

MOSES ISAAC // DRUMS

Hector: If one of us doesn't feel comfortable, we don't play the show. Straight up. We have a discussion. There's thoughts of we got your back, we're there, but if one of us doesn't feel comfortable, there's no discussion.
Moses: Yeah, we talk about it, we say are there any solutions, can we do something else? If no, then okay, I mean there'll be other shows. We're here to play shows, but we're also here to write music and create and—
Danny: And grow.
Moses: It's more for the longer rippling effect of people down the line. Question things, do whatever works for you.

MRR: You brought up safety. Are you talking about when you're playing to primarily white audiences?
Jenny: Mm-hmm. White men.

MRR: When you are playing to a group of white men, or even majority white folks, how do you see yourself taking up that space?
Jenny: If I do decide to be in that kind of space, I definitely come with a lot of anger. I don't always feel very strong, or like I can take it on, because it feels like a role for me. It's a space where I'm letting out my aggression. The things that I'm writing about do come from anger and from being upset at things that are happening to me, to people around me, and in Oakland. So it's anger, but in that specific space, I am expecting people to accept it and to question themselves too.
Moses: When we're playing shows that might be a predominantly white audience, we're not gonna cater ourselves to the group. She's gonna be who she is, we're gonna be who we are, and if they don't like it, fuck it!
Jenny: In those situations I don't want to educate anybody. That's not my role.

MRR: When you do play these shows and you're bringing this experience and rage, that light bulb goes off for some people who have never thought of it that way. At what point do you draw the line between educating people and people wanting to use you for emotional labor? Do you have a way to keep yourself safe at these shows, and is there a way that you navigate those situations specifically?
Danny: We usually have pretty big discussions before we decide to agree to play a show. Sometimes Jenny has expressed a lot of discomfort going into a show, and so as cis dudes in the band, what we can do is say, "We have your back. If you don't feel comfortable playing the show, we don't have to play the show. And if you think that this could be a platform to share your experience and your anger and maybe people will get it, we're there to support you." And because it is vulnerable, and even though there are three other people in the band, the front person gets a lot of the focus. Making sure that Jenny feels supported hopefully takes the edge off being on stage.
Jenny: It does. I only ever feel nervousness for really big shows. Having those conversations with the guys is super helpful. I feel like I'm very in tune with how much I can give at a certain point. But we've always decided as a band not to push on me not feeling safe in a situation. And when I'm there, I don't see anything else. Everything's blank, and I'm just feeling my anger. I don't have any time to think about the other people around me. As much as it's a public thing, it's very personal for me because there are things that I'm writing and whenever I'm saying it, it's clicking in my brain and the emotions and the anger is coming out, the frustrations are coming out and that's all I'm dealing with in that moment.
Moses: It's still an intimate experience.

MRR: Thanks for sharing that.
Danny: I've never felt this way before where it's not a performance. Musicians can be entertainers on stage, but I feel very lucky that in punk and especially in Provoke we're not performers. Jenny's not up there for your entertainment. It is a very personal and vulnerable thing, and we're sharing this with you for these fifteen minutes. Luckily we haven't run into situations where people get offended or try to flex on us or anything like that. And if they do, we're all here together as a unit, like step up, like fuck around and find out!
Jenny: I got a black belt [laughter].

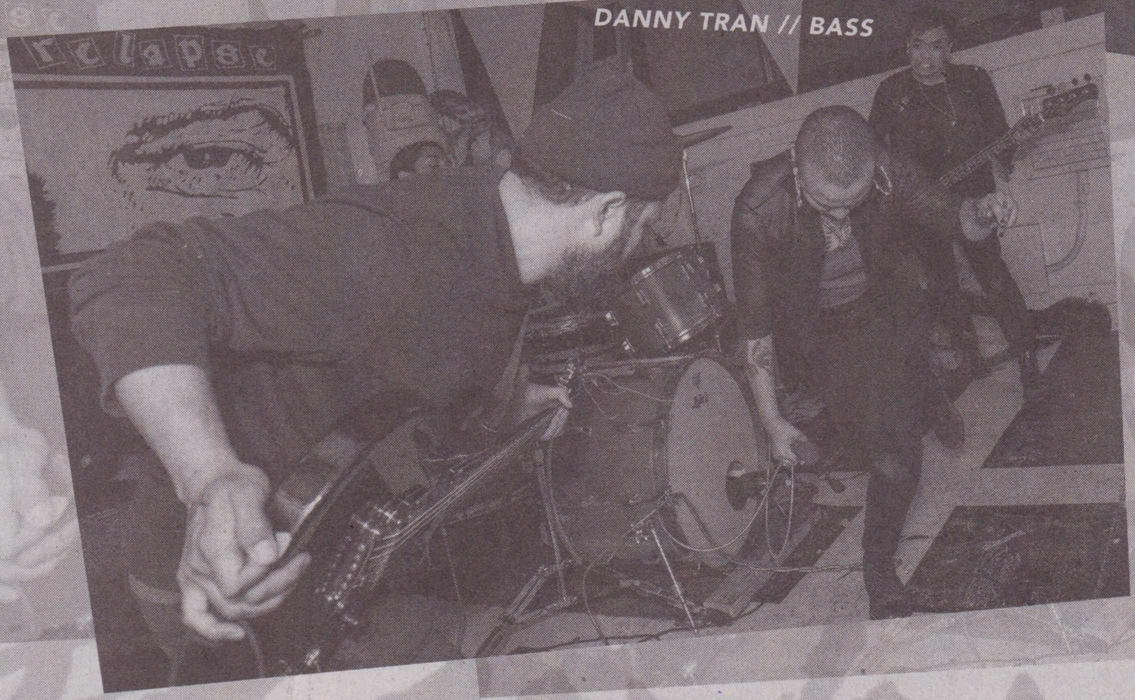
MRR: Coming back to going to a show and not seeing yourself represented...
Moses: It's the same as when you're watching movies growing up, you know? Now you see Black people in movies and you're like, "That's sick!" But growing up you didn't really see that shit. It just subconsciously felt like I couldn't relate to achieving those types of things because the framework wasn't there. There was no seed planted. So bands like us, it's just planting the seed for someone in the future.
And that line moves I think. Yeah, it's for us, but for some person in the crowd, it might be their first punk show, and they might be like, "Hey, there's somebody that is like me doing this." Hopefully that's inspiring.
Hector: I definitely get something out of the band though. The relationship and experiences I've shared with these people, that's what I get out of it. It's not necessarily when we play shows, it's these smaller moments like when we're just eating Taco Bell and farting around and I don't know, just doing dumb shit together and leaning on each other in tough times and through family shit or breakups or just political strain or whatever. It's an extension of myself and my family.

HECTOR ESQUEDA // GUITAR

Moses: Oh for sure. We're growing. I'm not entirely the same person I was when I first joined the band and I think that's the way it should be. I think it should be challenging. That's where the growth happens.
Danny: Sometimes when it's challenging, people will throw in the towel or people get hurt, shit gets talked and bands break up. For us, letting go and just being humble, like "Yeah, they're right and I'm wrong, and I'm gonna like learn and grow to be better with them and continue moving on this journey."

MRR: Y'all, let's go around the room: first concert, real quick.
Hector: Wasn't it...we both...
Jenny: Rage Against the Machine! [laughter]
Hector: We were kids. We both went to the exact same first concert. It was Rage Against the Machine at the Oakland Coliseum.

MRR: That's fuckin' dope.
Hector: Crazy. Serendipitous.
Jenny: My mom was gonna drop me off with my friend and then she saw everybody around and was like, "There's no fuckin' kids here!" She bought a ticket from some random lady and came [laughter]. And then she ended up really liking them.
Hector: Yeah. I was in the nosebleeds.
Jenny: I was in the nosebleeds too. There was hella people smoking. My mom was just like...
Hector: It had the backdrop for the Battle of Los Angeles tour, but it said Battle of Oakland.



DANNY TRAN // BASS

MRR: Do you guys wanna talk about your recordings? What are your plans with those songs?
Hector: We put out a couple tapes. We want to do a 7". We want to do it ourselves, so we recorded two songs at the end of last year, did a tour, finished up these two songs, did two new songs today, and will probably get it pressed in the next couple months. I'm really excited about these songs, because this is also a good representation of us four, whereas I think the last tapes there was some crossover between songs before Jenny. We're gonna go do Break Free Fest in Philly. We're gonna try to do the East Coast in the summer, maybe do something down in Mexico and the Pacific Northwest later in the year. We've all got full-time jobs.
Moses: It's all lyrics from Jenny, really belting it out. All the demos led up to this.
Danny: These songs are hard.
Jenny: They're scary. [laughter]
Danny: They've got harder riffs. Basslines are harder, drum parts are harder, we all just upped the ante a little bit.
Hector: I'm really excited because Jenny has written her first song in Spanish. I'm really excited for people to hear everything on this one.

MRR: When you put out those two songs on Bandcamp, that artwork caught me. Is that gonna be the same artwork for the 7"?

Moses: Originally we wanted to do a collage. We got good feedback and then we decided, fuck it, we should just use it for the 7".

MRR: It's a super powerful piece of artwork.

Moses: Yeah, we were just in my bedroom just cutting mags. We went to the Creative Reuse Center on Telegraph and bought magazines and went to my room and were using X-acto knives that cut a little part of my bedsheet by accident. And then we just went, "It looks good? Alright." I'm glad you connected with it because I felt like when we sat back as a group and looked at it, it hit me in a kind of—

Danny: Moses was really nervous about it. But I think the image takes on more meaning the more you look at it. The songs talk about displacement and being proud of where you're from, they talk about questioning the space that you take up. I think the artwork unintentionally touched on a lot of that. When you put the images together, it tells a narrative.

MRR: Any last thoughts y'all want to throw in there? Anything you guys want to highlight before we wrap this up?

Hector: I want more bands in the Bay Area, everywhere basically, if you take up a platform, every now and then, do a little something to give back and contribute to what you're preaching about. That's important for all of us. We all do it in our daily lives with checking fools that are acting out. But as a group, if we have an opportunity to do something for a cause, that's important. If there's a benefit show that comes up, we want to be on it. Shows are fun but it's cool to actually feel good about what we're doing.

Jenny: What do you do within your community? I teach because I was born and raised in Oakland, and that's me giving back to my community. I'm really good at it and so I do it, and someone needs to do it. Right now there is a huge crisis -- we don't have teachers in the school district. Kids who are going through this transition of Oakland being gentrified are suffering. And who are their supporters? Teachers. They see us more than they see their own parents, who are probably suffering at home getting displaced, not knowing how long they can be in their apartments or houses. I guess really what I'm trying to say is look at Oakland, look at your community and see what's actually going on. This specifically does affect me because we're about to go on strike. Today we had our first rally. It's going to happen. LA is going on strike on Monday. Acknowledge the history, acknowledge what's going on, and do something about it if you're going to take up space in Oakland.

Hector: I think it's important for bands to use that platform to do more than just what's in their immediate punk community. I love seeing how bands have been putting on benefit shows and giving back to organizations, especially organizations at the border. We do what we can. None of us are here to make money off this. And the money that we do make, sometimes it can go back in the band but it's bigger than us. We try to do that and hopefully that trend continues to grow. It's very important for us if we are able to inspire others to do stuff. That makes us all feel really warm and fuzzy inside, you know? It's a contagious thing and that's how change happens.

Moses: For me it's just giving back to the community that raised me. I think Danny and I were talking about this earlier, about how sometimes people are moving because it's too hard to live here now. For me, I'm just very happy that I can put back into something that gave a lot to me growing up, regardless if it was fuckin' weird or I was still a minority in it, but I am stoked to put in the work back into something that basically raised me. And this is where I want to do it, these are the people I want to do it with. We're here just fuckin' doing what we know how to do. We out here.

Listen to Provoke: provokehc.bandcamp.com.

apsurd

I SAW APSURD when my band toured in Europe; we played together in Zagreb, Croatia in early spring of 2018. Their set haunted me—not just because we slept in a squat above the venue and the show turned into a rave with blaring beats well into the next morning. For the rest of tour I couldn't stop thinking about them and their unique, jangly, disjointed melodies and heady vocals. It left a big impression on me. I hope that you who are reading this will take the time to check out their music, if you like melodic punk with discordant riffs and fast rhythms.

Interview and introduction by Booz Ullrey.
Photographs by Joža (Subsite).

MRR: What are your songs about? What inspires you to write lyrics? What do you hope that people get out of your songs?
Dragana: Our songs are mostly about existential dread, the finality and transience of life, everyday anxiety, isolation, and death. How to deal with these feelings, how to embrace them when you can't beat them. I know that many people feel the same; some of them talk about it, some of them don't. I'm part of this second group of people who mostly choose not to talk. But when I first started writing lyrics I realized that these subjects inspire me the most. I hope that people can get some kind of relief or liberation through our songs, and that our songs have a cathartic effect. Otherwise (hopefully not) they can get more anxiety.

MRR: Your guitar sound and riffs are really unique, they don't follow typical structures. I was immediately drawn to the style. When did you start playing? What inspires you? Do you play other instruments?
Sanja: I played the piano as a little kid, then switched to guitar at the age of fourteen. I started my first band with two other girls when I was ten and we kept it going until we were around seventeen. We were total outsiders, smashing boxes due to the lack of a drum set, and we never played for anyone but ourselves. Then they moved on to other things and I kept searching for bandmates, which is very difficult in Belgrade. I feel really lucky to have Apsurd now. I wasn't going out much, so I couldn't find any interesting people to hang out with. DIY punks are especially well hidden in Belgrade. I lived a pretty isolated life until my mid-twenties, which is when I finally entered the actual underground punk scene. Perhaps my playing style is not so common because most of the time I was playing for myself and didn't have any real outside references. What inspires me is any sort of honest and fearless expression that reveals a thinking individual, who also happens to be anti-fascist. I feel like all the fake crap and banality peels off and rots when a really good band is playing.

MRR: Do you have other artists in your families?
Scott: My grandpa played trombone in a jazz band until his death, even managing to play with a barely-mobile hand after his stroke. Being around him when I was really young was a big reason I started getting into music in the first place.

Dragana: My father is a self-taught guitarist and used to play very often when I was a kid, but classic stuff. So my first punk band with my brother was on acoustic guitar.

MRR: Do you ever have dreams about writing music?
Dragana: Although I remember most of my dreams—sometimes they're ordinary, sometimes they're historical, and often they're weird and surreal—I don't remember ever dreaming about writing music. Actually, I don't dream often about anything I do in my real life. What usually happens is that inspiration comes between dream and reality, either for the music or lyrics. And I've learned, after so many ideas lost in oblivion, that in that moment of inspiration I have to grab the bass (or pencil and paper), whether it's 11 PM or 6 AM.

MRR: What is the scene like in Belgrade? Are there a lot of bands with women in them? What are some of the bands you like to play with? What are some of the bands that got you into punk?
Sanja: The scene has been dead in Belgrade for a couple of years, but now it's slowly coming back to life. We finally have a new DIY space for shows, but it's still very hard to organize gigs for bands coming from anywhere far, because the space doesn't make enough money to cover travelling expenses. Luckily, Zagreb is close enough and the scene there is more alive at the moment. It's basically our second home, we have great friends in cool bands there and we can always count on a fun time when we go to play with them. The bands especially close to our hearts are the Celetoids, Neon Lies, Eke Buba, Indikator B, Parnepar, and Abergaz. In Belgrade, we've recently played with our friends Mutabo, which is one of the most exciting local bands at the moment. That was our best show in BG. There are not so many bands in our scene right now in general and especially not with women in them. We hope that this will change in our lifetime, but it isn't looking good. The hipsters and gray zone assholes are recruiting young kids and pretty much making sure that everything stays bland and boring.
Scott: Belgrade's definitely quieter than a lot of other cities, but there is a really good core of people in the scene that make it worthwhile. Also, like Sanja said, it's slowly coming back to life. I'm hoping it climbs out of its grave sooner rather than later. All of the bands in Belgrade and Zagreb that she mentioned are definitely on my list as well.

My first experience playing with a band from the Balkans was with the Celetoids almost four years ago. They and Neon Lies are a huge reason I stayed out here in the first place. The bands that originally got me into punk were mostly bands from Minneapolis—or other smaller bands that passed through Minneapolis. I never really went through "the classics" of punk, and it was only after experiencing those local shows that I started to dive in. Seeing smaller bands—too many to name, and some that existed for only a short while—was a huge deal. Their influence was definitely augmented by the atmosphere and general politics of the various basements and other spaces where they played.
Dragana: The Belgrade bands that got me into punk were bands from the early '90s like Ex-cess and Brainstorm. Soon after that I discovered bands from the '80s like Solunski Front, KZV, and Necrophilia. The current situation is not so good, and there aren't many bands with women. In fact, there are not many bands at all, especially when considering that Belgrade is a city of nearly two million inhabitants. We love to play with our good friends Mutabo, Крах, and св.Псета from Belgrade. The most strange thing for me is that there aren't any kids playing old school punk. It sometimes makes me think that we are a vanishing breed.

MRR: How did you start getting interested in punk? Was it at a young age? How did it find you, or you it?
Dragana: I was twelve years old when I discovered punk. My older brother got a tape with bands like the Sex Pistols, Exploited, Clash, and Ramones. He listened to it every day so loudly that I could already hear the music at the beginning of our street when I came home from school. Even now I remember that my first thought when I heard the Sex Pistols was "This is crap, like an old man singing a song in agony." But after two weeks they became my favorite band. That's how much time I needed to literally become addicted. In the beginning I was totally into British punk and Oi! music, then I discovered American punk and hardcore punk bands (Poison Idea, Toxic Reasons, and Wipers were the most important for me), then Finnish hardcore punk (Appendix, Tampere SS, Kaaos) and of course Yugoslavian like UBR (still my favorite!), Odpadki Civilizacije, Tožibabe, Generali, ZRM, Solunski Front, etc.

I was lucky to grow up in a country (I'm thinking of Yugoslavia of course) in which I could watch punk-inspired rock'n'roll bands from all of Yugoslavia on national TV! At that time, I couldn't have imagined what precious bands were hiding underground. My interest in punk — or more accurately my passion for it — was a natural path.
Sanja: I think it's mostly my own instincts and a bit of luck that led me to punk, since I didn't meet other punks 'til later and spent most of my early youth in forest adventures, making short movies with my best friend, jumping around with headphones on, or reading in my room. The first punk concert I went to was Blondie when I was fourteen. Through them I discovered bands like Television, Patti Smith, the Voidoids, Ramones, New York Dolls, and so many others. At that time, the streets of Belgrade were packed with cheap bootleg CDs, so I could easily satisfy my curiosity. A lot of the time I was choosing bands almost randomly, sometimes aided a little by the peddlers' knowledge of music. The first big discoveries were Dead Kennedys, X-Ray Spex, Hüsker Dü, Leatherface, Post Regiment. In high school, I went deep into post-punk/deathrock with bands like Killing Joke, Phantom Limbs, Magazine, Part1. All that stuff still really thrills me.
Scott: I was pretty much clueless and removed from any sort of "scene" to the point where playing in a punk band seemed like

a dusty relic of the past. I had no idea that any such dimension existed until I was twenty and discovered punk spaces and house shows in Minneapolis. The first time I saw a show at one of those spaces, it really felt like I was given a key to some previously-invisible world. I thought, "How the fuck did I miss out on this for so long?!"

MRR: Your sound is really reminiscent of early '80s ex-Yugoslavian punk. How much of an influence is that on you, versus contemporary punk?

Dragana: I would love to say that Yugoslavian hardcore punk is the one and only influence on Apsurd, although it's probably impossible after so many years and decades of listening to British, American, Finnish, and other punk. Yugo punk is not our only influence, but for me it is the most important influence for sure. I'm very happy when the first association people get when listening to Apsurd is Yugoslavian hardcore punk.

There are so many bands nowadays all over the world. Some of them are rather good and I love to see and hear them live, buy their albums, and support them in every way. Still, when I'm thinking about what new bands or LPs thrill me the most, I need time to figure it out. I don't know how to explain it. On the other hand, with the bands from '80s I've listened to all my life, I know every tone, and they still give me goosebumps like they did the first time I heard them. What I can tell you for sure is that '80s punk inspires me the most, and Yugoslavia in that time was such a hardcore punk treasure!

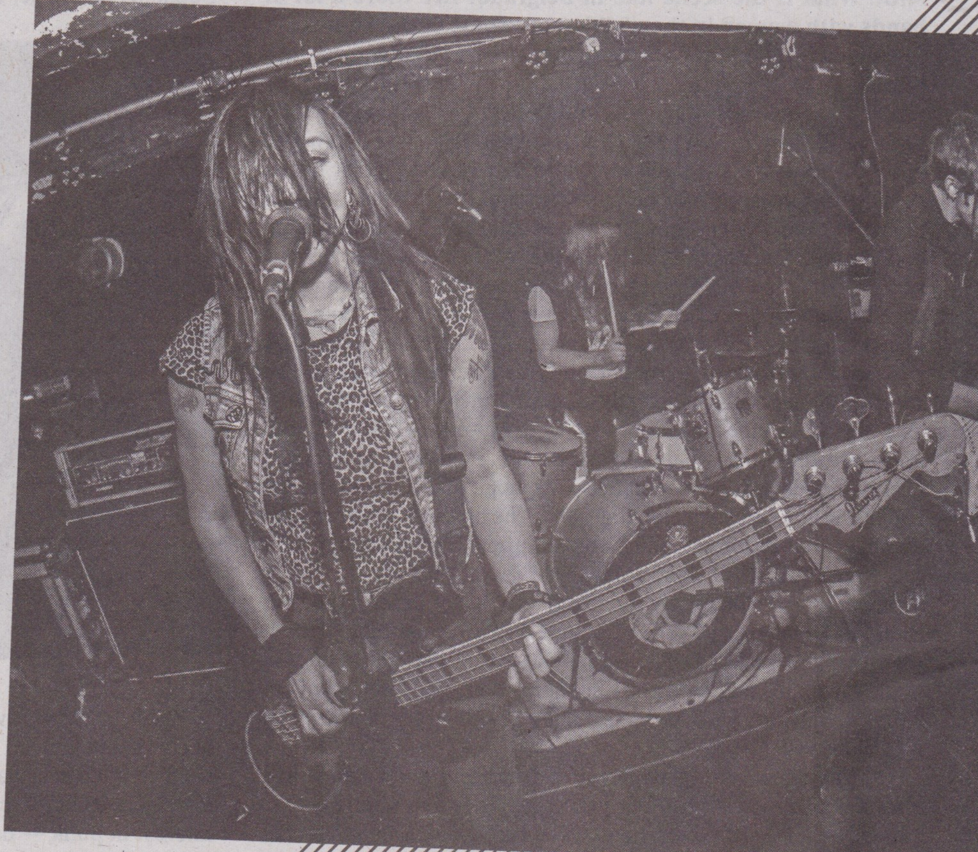
Sanja: The ex-Yu bands are a direct influence on Apsurd. Once we established that as the backbone of the band, the three of us could meet on the same wavelength and then each find our individual sound from there. Dragana's bass lines make sure that we don't stray too much from the initial idea behind the band. When Scott and I play without her on the bass, it can get a bit too weird, so it's great to have some sort of a boundary that keeps things more straightforward. All three of us listen to old bands as much as we keep track of the contemporary stuff, but each of us has a different focus. Mine is early UK anarcho punk and hardcore. I also have a soft spot for nihilism that will chill you to the bone, like Yanka Dyagileva or Nerorgasmo. Some newer bands that I have been really struck by are Kobra, Crazy Spirit, Odio, Tørsö, Padkarosda, Una Bèstia Incontrolable, G.L.O.S.S, Chain Cult, Diät, Bib. And it's awesome that we got to play our first gigs with Exit Order, Silent Era, Braincell, and Vanilla Poppers.

MRR: Do you have any plans to play outside of Belgrade or Zagreb? Where do you wish you could play? Maybe a hardworking punk reading this will invite you to tour in their town!

Dragana: We've already played in a few other towns in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, mostly club gigs (which we prefer), but also a few famous festivals like Monteparadiso (Pula, Croatia), Cramp fest (Godovič, Slovenia), Antifa fest (Ljibljana, Slovenia), and Iluzije slobode (Bečej, Serbia).

We were talking how it would be great to play in America and perhaps it could be easy to organize considering that Scott was born and raised in Minnesota and still has a lot of friends and punk contacts there. Probably the biggest problem would be getting visas for Sanja and me but, we'll see, there's time for that. Honestly, a couple of gigs in Finland would be a dream come true, but there are so many places in the world we'd like to see and play, to meet people and experience different cultures from Asia to South America.

Scott: It's always really fun to go anywhere with Dragana and Sanja and every new place brings new friends and a good time so honestly I'm down for absolutely any country. Toing back to play in the U.S. is one of my bigger hopes—partially for the selfish reason that I haven't been back in almost four years and I've found out I'm genuinely really bad at keeping in contact with my friends when



I'm far away! I really miss a lot of them and would love to see what's new, since I'm extremely disconnected now. Even though I would rather be away from that place in general, imagining us three out there together with good people in good places is a thought that's excitedly jumping around in my skull whenever talk of a U.S. tour comes up.

Sanja: Playing live and travelling with a band is the most exciting thing ever invented, so I would happily play in every place on Earth and make friends with millions of different people. In fact, if you ask me, the only reason we're not constantly on the road are the fucking borders.

You can listen to Apsurd's Derealizacija *CS at doomtownrecords.bandcamp.com.*

MORTON 2019
SMOG Veil
RECORDS
says "good bye MRR!"
FUCK
AND JUST FUCK YOU! BECAUSE IT IS PUNK
AND ASSHOLE
MIKE, A MOTHER FUCKER
FUCK TRUMP!
FUCK!
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL
FUCK!

IN SOLIDARITY W

Recent readers of *Maximum Rocknroll* likely know that the pages of the magazine have, over the course of the past year, included an ongoing debate on whether the magazine should feature Israeli punk or punks. The debate emerged when *MRR* first announced that it would be running an Israeli scene report, and then later decided against doing so in solidarity with the Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) movement and in acknowledgement of the illegal and immoral Israeli occupation of Palestine. This issue has been a challenging one for the people involved with content at MRR as well as the punk scene more broadly. We at *MRR* are unified in our opposition to Israeli apartheid policies, yet we have had differences of opinion regarding how to best stand in solidarity with the Palestinian fight for self-determination. How can our humble punk fanzine best amplify voices—Palestinian, Israeli, or otherwise—that stand against Israeli settler colonialism, militarization, and racism? How can we be sure that what we publish doesn't normalize or minimize a decades-long colonial occupation? How can we show readers that there are Israeli punks challenging the fucked-up status quo while nonetheless never forgetting that Palestinians are the ones on the receiving end of Israeli state violence? On the next page, you'll see that the magazine has decided to feature interviews with some anti-state and anti-occupation Israeli punks. Before those interviews, however, we felt it was important to provide historical and political context on the question of Palestine.

Despite how it is often presented in mainstream accounts in the U.S. and Europe, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is neither ancient nor religious in nature. It is a modern conflict over land between competing nationalist movements—one settler colonial and European in origin (Zionist/Israeli) and one anti-colonial and indigenous (Palestinian). There have been many forms of Palestinian resistance in the 71 years since the founding of the state of Israel and the 52 years since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, with BDS being among the more recent and transnational of those efforts. So what is BDS? The BDS movement is a global call by Palestinians (and allies) to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israeli persons or institutions that materially support Israeli occupation. The blueprint for this work is the boycott movement against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s, which was similarly dismissed by global leaders (most vociferously Ronald Reagan), but which was successful in helping dismantle that racist apartheid regime. Much like apartheid South Africa, Palestinian land is occupied and racially segregated by the Israeli military. The Gaza Strip has been called the world's biggest open-air prison, while the West Bank is among the world's most militarized zones. Palestinian refugees—made stateless in 1948 and/or in 1967 by actions that even the most distinguished Zionist Israeli historians admit amounted to ethnic cleansing—live suspended in one of the world's oldest and most intractable refugee crises. Even Palestinians in Israel, who technically comprise about twenty percent of the country's citizenry, live as second-class citizens and are routinely subjected to racialized violence and harassment. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reminded global audiences of this brutal reality when he recently boasted that Israel is "the national state, not of all its citizens, but only of the Jewish people."

The idea behind BDS is simple: we can all be involved in applying pressure to companies, governments, and individuals who materially benefit from the persecution of Palestinians. We can collectively disallow the Israeli state from undertaking its business as usual. Some typical examples of BDS actions include student demands that universities divest from corporations that invest in the Israeli military, or boycotts of companies—such as Sabra, Jamba Juice, and Sodastream—which have material ties to the Israeli military or state. BDS activists also call for the artistic and academic boycott of Israel. This call for boycott is in direct response to propaganda efforts by Israel designed to whitewash the occupation by bringing artists, scholars, musicians, and athletes for state-led tours of the country. In recent years, Israeli leaders have been particularly active in trying to woo noteworthy LGBTQ folks, African Americans, and representatives of other marginalized communities to visit Israel and travel on highly curated and publicized tours. The reason for this is simple: the more the world's oppressed peoples come to see the Palestinian struggle as linked to their own, the more the Israeli government attempts to present itself as a champion of progressive values and human rights. The BDS movement says fuck that; we see you and we won't be fooled.

We believe that any international band traveling to Israel is acting in defiance of the Palestinian people's stated demands; BDS not only calls for a state of non-cooperation with the Israeli government and its economic and cultural interests, but also demands resistance to the normalization of the occupation. The ask in that regard is very clear: Do not travel to Israel. When it comes to DIY punk being produced by Israelis within Israel, the call for a cultural boycott is more fuzzy. Is including the voices of Israeli punks who espouse anti-occupation views or engage in anti-state politics still a violation of BDS demands? This question formed the crux of the conflict among the people who make *MRR*. From the onset, there have been different

WITH PALESTINE

viewpoints on how to best support the Palestinian freedom movement and to amplify an anti-occupation message in our zine. Yet both those of us who argued it was a moral duty to publish anti-occupation and anti-state Israeli punk voices as well as those of us who argued that any promotion of Israeli bands would normalize occupation and ethnic cleansing have championed our positions in order to try to do right by a freedom movement that we stand *with* but aren't necessarily *of*. It's up to each of us, especially those of us who have media links (like *MRR*) to think seriously about how to best honor the call for BDS, how to best support the cause for Palestinian liberation, and to criticize anti-Semitism in all its forms. Making sense of these good faith disagreements, while centering Palestinian demands and voices, must be an ongoing conversation. Beyond our internal disagreements about how to best enact solidarity, these debates in the magazine revealed alarming swathes of mostly European punks who do *not* believe in solidarity with Palestinians at all, despite claiming to be anarchists or anti-racists. We vehemently reject this politic, an incoherent and surprising defense of a right-wing government's racialized military occupation. This position stems from a belief that any critique of Israeli policy is a form of anti-Semitism. There are many people—punk and otherwise—who shy away from critiques of Israel and Zionism out of a desire to challenge anti-Semitism in all of its forms. Indeed, the equating of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism has been among the most troubling long-term goals of the Israeli government. The logic of this argument hinges on the notion that *all* Jews the world over are Zionists—i.e. that they are Jewish/Israeli nationalists who believe in a racially pure Israel—who tolerate no criticism of Israeli politics or policy. Allow us to state our position unequivocally: criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitism. While this doesn't mean that no critique of Israel can be anti-Semitic, critiquing Israeli policy is not an inherently anti-Semitic act. The idea that anti-Zionism is necessarily anti-Semitism is a claim typically made by supporters of Israeli policies to discredit both non-Jewish and Jewish voices against Israeli settler colonialism and occupation. It is in this spirit that *MRR* is featuring critical punk voices from inside of Israel—it is simply not the case that all Jews or even that all Israelis consent to the notion that their own freedom must be at the expense of Palestinian lives. Both the racist dehumanization of Palestinians and the resurgent scourge of global anti-Semitism are branches of the same diseased tree; both are racist worldviews that must be stamped out.

Israeli political punks are not the only Jewish voices to critique Zionist nationalism. Historically, even in the earliest years of the Zionist project in Europe, the position that anti-Zionism was tantamount to anti-Semitism would have been seen as incoherent at best and problematic at worst to a majority of European Jews. In the late 19th century, when Zionism emerged in response to anti-Jewish violence in Europe, it remained relatively unpopular among its target constituency for decades. Theodor Herzl, one of the foundational figures of early Zionism, lamented the fact that so many of his co-religionists either ignored or actively disdained the Zionist movement. Many Jews of the time bristled at the Zionist argument that they could never truly assimilate into their home nations, a position which mimicked the logic of anti-Semites who argued that all Jews had dual loyalties and were thus not to be trusted. Undeterred, Herzl wrote in his influential pamphlet *The Jewish State* that anti-Semitism "exists wherever Jews live in appreciable numbers. Where it does not exist, it is brought in with Jewish immigrants." Herzl's many critics pointed out that his argument was marred by the victim-blaming logic that anti-Jewish violence was the fault of Jews rather than that of anti-Semites. Most Jewish Europeans of the late 19th and early 20th centuries simply ignored the Zionist movement, instead continuing to live their lives (and fight for rights) in whatever place they called home. In Eastern Europe in particular, where anti-Jewish pogroms were enacted by virulently anti-Semitic governments, large numbers of Jews joined socialist and communist parties which espoused anti-racist internationalist solidarities and viewed Zionism as an understandable yet heartbreakingly misguided political idea. For his part, Herzl's position was clear; a Jewish colonial project was necessary because Jews could never be at home among non-Jews; Uganda, Argentina, and Palestine were all proposed because they shared the useful quality of being home only to "primitive" peoples. This racist and segregationist logic is the foundational worldview upon which subsequent Zionist policies still operate. It is thus that so many right-wing Israeli leaders are more animated when denouncing the call for Palestinian rights than they are when discussing the troubling spread of white supremacism and anti-Semitic violence around the world. It is no mistake that Netanyahu sees a great ally in Donald Trump and the global white nationalist movement. What does this mean for the punks? True solidarity is distressingly difficult to achieve, especially across occupied borders. Still, we must relentlessly strive to do just that. Palestinians are a people under daily threat of extinction; as people invested in justice, human dignity, and a free future it is all of our duties to act in solidarity with them loudly and unapologetically at every turn.

The Israel Punk Archive Project

While visiting home last month I decided to interview Barak Meiri, a long time punk, about a really interesting project he was working on, the Israel Punk Archive. Barak said he would do it but wanted there to also be something with a current band. So we decided this would be a mini-report about Israeli punk, past and present, alongside an interview with one of the greatest current hardcore bands in Israel, Jarada.

Interviews and introduction by Daniel Becker. Photos provided by Gil Rosenthal, David Rosen and Malkiella Benchabat

MRR: Before I ask you about the archive, I wanna ask a little bit about you. Where are you from? How did you got into punk / hardcore? What bands / projects have you been involved in?

Barak Meiri: I'm from a very small rural town in the north of Israel. I got into punk when I was around thirteen, and started going to shows about a year later. The spread of the internet helped a lot with getting to know people. At the first show I went to, I already knew many of the people attending and playing, and at the end of the night, I had dozens of new friends, many of whom I'm still friends with, and some are still active in the punk scene. Punk changed my whole life pretty much instantly; I got very active in the scene pretty much right away, and went to almost all the shows around the country. As I was drawn to the more DIY, politically-engaged, hardcore punk sub-scene, in a matter of months I went from a proud meat-eating zionist, who was waiting to serve in the military like my father and brother, to an anarchist vegan who signed the refuseniks letter at the young age of fourteen and a half. [*Ed. note: The refuseniks letter is an annual letter to the prime minister signed by Israeli teenagers who refuse the mandatory draft.*]

I sang and played in several bands over the years: Pigeons Removal was my first punk band. Our "hit" song was an anti-army UK82-style tune. Kafa Lapanim Shel Limor Livnat ("A Slap to the Face of Limor Livnat;" Limor Livnat was the education minister at the time) was a political hardcore punk band who got into some legal trouble, mostly over the name of the band and a song called "Death to Judaism." Mahleket Hanikot Shotrim ("The Department of Choking Cops," a play on the name of the internal investigations department of the police) was my longest lasting band. An obnoxious, provocative, somewhat political yet always humorous and sarcastic outfit. We played between 2006 and 2016 and toured Europe in 2011. Over the years we released a demo, an album, and two EPs. Tarbut Ra'a ("Bad Culture") is my active band. We play mostly old school punk rock, and sing about different subjects like veganism, depression and sandwiches.

MRR: Have you seen a lot of changes in the years you've been involved in the punk scene?

Barak Meiri: It's a bit difficult to talk about the scene as a whole, as there are always many different sub-scenes operating at the same time. The scene has gotten older. In the early 2000s the scene consisted mostly of teenagers, forming up bands and organizing the shows. Today, there are still quite a few kids in the scene, but a lot of the early '00s people stuck around and are active in bands and venues.

Parts of the scene were very much into politics and social issues when I started going to shows. Many people were active in different protest groups and going to demonstrations, and there was a lot of politics in shows as well: banners, zines and bands singing political lyrics. The punk scene's involvement in political issues dwindled down over the years, and by 2016 it seemed like punk had gotten completely apolitical in Israel. But when people who still cared about stuff realized that, a wave of more political bands formed and talk of politics has reemerged in the scene. Today, the scene is still not as political as it used to be, but there's still a lot more political involvement than there was a few years back.

One more big change is the level of musicianship and being serious about the quality of your sound. It used be pretty much a non-issue, but now a lot (if not most) musicians in the scene are very talented and care about the way their bands sound live and in recordings.

There were many ups and downs, but today there are more shows and bands than ever before. There were times when there was one punk show in the country every few weeks or a month, now there are sometimes weekends with four or five punk shows.

MRR: What is the purpose or mission of the archive?

Barak Meiri: The primary purpose of the archive is to save the huge amount of Israeli punk documentation rotting away in basements around the country. So much stuff like unreleased band tapes, videos, pictures, flyers, and newspaper articles regarding Israeli punk has never been digitized and might be lost forever as time passes by. I'm trying to keep that from happening.

The secondary purpose, which is almost as important for me, is to make the materials available to the public, as a documentation of an extremely interesting subculture. At the moment I use the Facebook page, Instagram and YouTube channel for that, but in the future I hope to have a website in which the full digitized archive will accessible.

It started almost two years ago, when I was talking to some friends about '80s Israeli punk (which was almost non-existent) and thought I'll to try to dig deeper and see if there were any pre-'90s bands that were around that we somehow hadn't heard of. Very soon I found myself contacting dozens of friends and strangers who used be in the scene, trying to find everything I coud that involves punk in Israel and is not available online. From looking for '80s gems, I quickly started gathering anything pre-2000 and then also some early '00s stuff.

MRR: How many people are involved in the project?

Barak Meiri: A few friends helped a bit over time, but mostly it's just me. Driving around the country to pick up the materials, digitizing everything, sorting, editing, and running the social media pages. I have to admit it is way too much work for one person to handle, but I'm doing my best trying to keep up.

MRR: Can you share some cool or inspiring stories about things that you found out about through the archive?

Barak Meiri: Lots of interesting stories around the archive, but I will tell you about two of the most interesting ones:

In 1983, a punk kid called Avi Pitchon recorded a Hebrew punk song that was playing on a national radio station. A few years later that kid formed bands (A-Sign Brigade, Noon Mem) which were pretty much the first political punk bands in the country, in an era when local punk bands were almost non-existent. Anyway, for decades, Pitchon kept talking about this unknown punk tune he has on an old cassette. I started nagging him to get him to put the song online. With my help, he eventually digitized the tape and we posted the song, in very bad quality, on Facebook, trying to find any clue about who's the band behind it. We tried to talk with everyone we knew who was involved with punk in Israel in the '80s, and even reached out to people from the radio who broadcasted the song back in the day. A few hours after we posted the song, some guy called Gil Sha'ar replied.

Sha'ar recorded the song, "HaMdina Mitporeret" ("The State Is Crumbling"), plus an English version titled "I Remember," when he was working in a recording studio in NYC in 1981. It was supposed to be the first song for a full-length album, but no further songs were recorded, the whole project was cut, and the song was never released. Sha'ar actually had no memory of how the song ended up, at least once, on the Israeli radio. Anyway, Sha'ar digitized the original song recording, sent it to me, and since then it's been accessible on the archive's YouTube channel, available to the public for the first time ever.

The guy who co-recorded the song, Adam Zakin, died in 1989. A few months ago, Gil Sha'ar passed away as well. It deeply saddened me, but it also made me realize how important this project is. If I had waited one more year, this song would've been lost forever.

A shorter story: In the mid-'90s there was an Israeli punk band called Anus, from the Ono Valley

area. It was, and still is, quite a well-known band in the scene, even though only two songs were ever released. After I started the archive, I discovered that there was actually another punk band playing in Israel under the same name. The "other" Anus consisted of Olim Hadashim—immigrants from ex-USSR countries. In the early '90s all the Russian punks had a completely separate scene from the main Israeli scene and the two scenes had almost no connection over the years. Both bands had no knowledge of the other's existence, up until I started the archive.

MRR: Can you talk about the tribute to Israeli punk shows that you organized?
In order to get more people to hear about the archive, and getting more materials and reach, and also as a way to pay respect to the bands who built the scene, I've started doing tribute shows where me and other musicians from the scene are playing covers of old Israeli punk songs. The first show was in January last year, and the second just a few weeks ago. They draw both young punks who are active in the scene and also some people who used to come to shows in the past and are not into punk anymore. In the first night we did there were people aged 14–58 or so, which is quite unusual for a punk show in Israel. Because I also want to show people the great present of punk in Israel, and not just the past, I always have two current bands opening the night.

MRR: What are some of your favorite Israeli punk bands that no longer exist but are covered in the archive?
Nekhei Naatza is probably the most influential Israeli punk band. An anarchist, anti-zionist, hardcore punk band, active in the '90s, with members from kibbutzim in the Upper Galilee. Sartan Ha'Shad is '90s punk from Jerusalem. They started as a very raw punk band, and over the years moved on to a tighter, more melodic, Sex Pistols style. They were such an unusual phenomenon in Jerusalem that they were mentioned many times in the local papers, including the gossip columns! Chaos Rabak is angry early '00s street punk. They had a big influence on a lot of bands who came after them, including my first punk band.

MRR: What are some of your favorite current Israeli punk bands?
Helem is clean yet angry punk, political and in-your-face. Not on Tour is an amazing hardcore / pop punk band who's been getting more and more international recognition. Cyanide is an old school punk rock band formed by sixteen year olds. Some songs remind me of *Killed By Death* style punk. Great stuff. Akrabut is dirty D-beat / street punk / hardcore punk, full of rage, anti-Israeli and pro-Palestinian.

MRR: What are your hopes for the Israeli scene and for the archive?
Barak Meiri: I hope the Israeli scene will continue to grow, with more kids coming in, caring not just about the music or about getting shitfaced, but also about serious issues. For the archive, I hope to get more materials, to find time and funding to work on everything, and to build a website containing the entire archive. I also have vague plans for exhibitions, a book, and a compilation record. But all of that is somewhere down the road.

JARADA

Jarada is Itai on vocals, David on guitar, Dean on bass and Ben on drums.

MRR: What is Jarada? Why did you pick that name?
Itai Kuskus: Jarada is actually pronounced "Cha-rada" with the Hebrew H, which translates better to the Spanish "J". We thought it looks better and will confuse a lot of people, which we are always in favor of. The meaning in Hebrew is "anxiety." Our surroundings as a society in general and moreover, a community, mostly revolve around anxiety in all of its aspects. Our songs usually address these matters, whether it's about realizing that your reality is determined by individuals who don't care what will happen to you or when struggling people such as yourself with not enough exposure to the whole picture are being manipulated into strong and dark ideas, turning our society into a violent, racist, militaristic environment that's intolerant to anything that's different.

MRR: What bands would you say inspire your sound?
Itai Kuskus: We all grew up listening to mostly American old school hardcore punk. Specifically we could mention Negative Approach, Poison Idea, most of the Boston scene of that time, Minor Threat, etc. We're also into some great contemporary hardcore bands including Impalers, Warthog, Glue, and Exit Order. And of course some local roots—Nekhei Naatza and Dir Yassin mostly.

MRR: I know that the political climate in Israel / Palestine is one issue that you write about, for example in the song "If You're Right Wing Then They Fooled You." How much does the political climate in Israel / Palestine have to do with your songs?
Itai Kuskus: The Israel / Palestine climate is always there. I believe every Israeli hangs around with this lump on their back. Most are taught since a tender age to ignore it or even wear it with pride. We were all given all the justifications in the world as children who were growing up to these situations.

If you're a five or six year old and your parents wake you up in the middle of the night with the sounds of sirens in the background as they immediately strap a gas mask on your head, you start developing some questions. So they'll tell you the necessity of staying strong against all our enemies, especially after what happened to our people in the Holocaust. They'll expect you to fall in line in solidarity with everyone who gave their share to the country (which means getting drafted), they'll create a perfect "us against them" picture, delegitimize the whole "occupation" concept or the right these people have to determine their own fate under a regime which they'll decide on. That's when you get numb or apathetic or even slide to the fascist side of the scale, without even knowing, depends on how much you take these matters to your everyday reality.

"If You're Right Wing Then They Fooled You" talks about how the strongest virtue in Israeli society is not being a sucker and yet, most people are. So you come into the world and you're raised with not a lot of anything, really, but yet, all this time they keep telling you "you're one of the chosen few, god chose you, you are superior" when in fact you're in most cases, undereducated, ignorant, and poor. We're taught to identify a shitty deal on spot, so how is it that so many people fell in that trap? A lot of our songs deal with anxiety that feeds off injustice, insecurities and the lack of power as an individual against huge bureaucratic entities.

MRR: I liked the front cover of your self-titled record. Can you explain what it is and how you came up with the idea?

Itai Kuskus: At first the concept of the front cover was a bit of a joke. Dean found this postcard of PM Rabin and Chairman Arafat shaking hands during the Oslo agreements. We posted it on the fridge at our rehearsal space and at some point someone took this image of Eric Clapton from an Ernie Ball strings pack ad, and taped it on the postcard, adding a text bubble in which he wrote: "I shoved myself into this situation as well." I thought it was hilarious. We used the whole collage as the image to the front cover. Along the way it started to cause some other thoughts as a window to our childhood when there was a glimpse of hope to a better future between Israel and Palestine. Even then things were pretty shitty but at least mentioning the term "peace" wouldn't portray you as an anti-patriot traitor. And Clapton fits right in with the Israeli mentality of sticking to what we know, same old white blues rock on the radio, no room for new music, new ideas, something radical perhaps...It's all about keeping a status quo.

MRR: How has the Israeli punk scene changed over time? How is it right now in terms of music, people who show up, and politics?

Itai Kuskus: The main thing that changed in the scene during all these years was the comeback of political awareness and activism. Until the early 2000s, the Israeli scene was very political (well, most of it), a lot of bands consisted of politically active members who went to demonstrations and did a lot of activities against the occupation and other injustices. As these people got older, as in most scenes they scattered to their own paths of life and the kids who took over were more into musicianship, forming good bands, and getting the hell out of here. There was this void regarding a political voice. Also the kids weren't buying in. In one of the most political charged places on earth, you got a majority of teenagers who just didn't give a shit. They were more into trying to live and grow up as normal as possible.

Suddenly, a few years ago there was this notion that more kids were starting to get drawn in again; this time they were more socially / politically / sexually aware. From that you got this band called Mitromemot (which loosely means the female form of "Queers"), a queercore band consisting of teenagers singing about locking infamous far-right wing activists in their closet and how their grandma's mad because they didn't get drafted.

I think another change was going back to singing in Hebrew. Since we all wanted out, we worked mainly on music sung in English, but this kind of raw, angry music, with messages aiming to shock and disturb, has to be sung in Hebrew. And we weren't the only ones getting the idea. Along with us there was a whole streak of raging, political hardcore bands screaming their lungs out in Hebrew. Nidfakta (You Got Screwed), Moom (Defect), Shesh Shesh Shesh (Six Six Six), Cyanide, Social Virus, Akrabut (Solifugae), Helem (a term which resembles foolishness) etc.

The scene itself is way more politically aware than a decade ago, planning activities for the community, standing side by side in demonstrations and raising money for the refugees from South Sudan and Eritrea who are treated like subhumans and live in ghettos in south Tel Aviv, raising money and donating medical supplies for the people trapped in the Gaza Strip (Ya'el Project), and arranging Antifa events with participation of people from the Arab community. This is of course all by ourselves and against the will of the regime.

All authorities in the matter (the government, the municipality) are automatically against what's radical, independent and different from their narrative. Their opening point is to shut you down, as they did a couple of times, but we're still here, and after us there will be more to follow. Today more people get the idea that something is wrong here. An entire population is living without a secured future, without basic human rights and without even the right for self-determination and it's all under our watch. It's not only about the punk scene. We still have a long way to go but resistance, as small as it may be, is always welcome and always affects.

MRR: Can you talk a little bit about Beit Alpha? What is it? How did it start, what the mission is, and how many people approximately are involved?

Itai Kuskus: Beit Alpha is a small space in Tel Aviv in which we do most of our activities: practice, record and occasionally set up shows. We felt the need for a DIY space in Tel Aviv, mainly to answer our own needs but also set a place for everyone who's after something a bit different, a place where people can feel they belong, a place to set some social and political events or just have a good time with people as screwed up as you. We're about ten people running the place 100% voluntarily; each of us have his / her own band.

MRR: Any plans for the future? Tours, records?

We recently recorded an EP worth of new material, it corresponds with some of the current events around us in the past year and we're really proud of it. We'll look to release it on 7" and maybe manage to tour. Right now we're all obligated to full-time jobs which consume our time and souls so we can only hope for better days and good opportunities.

MRR: I know that you were very vocal about the *MRR* boycott of the Israeli scene last year. Can you share your thoughts about the boycott?

Itai Kuskus: I believe every person in the Israeli punk scene was very disappointed to hear that from an important cultural entity such as *MRR*, which a lot of us grew up getting to know more about punk rock by browsing through every issue we could put our hands on. Especially because the feeling that we're one of the only groups of people still actively opposing our government. We didn't ask to be born here and we don't like our reality as a part of an oppressing state, but we sure don't stand aside and let it go by without trying to resist or help the ones in need.

We're here. Front line. It's in our backyard. We know the gravity and the importance of these matters, and we're the first reaching out to our buddies over the fence, at least as much as we can as private individuals against a monstrous machine. I believe every group of people who do what they can to fight any injustice deserves recognition, respect and cooperation.

There's so much good music and positive messages from places you wouldn't even imagine. Just open your ears, and always try to look at the bigger picture.

jarada.bandcamp.com

Punk's not dad...

Issue 2 out soon! Forward, Haram, Gasmask Terror, + more!

Issue 1 (OAF, NoMeansNo, punk record shops and docs) still available

midlifecrisiserahc.bigcartel.com

(MRR, I fucking love you.)

CASCADE
RECORD PRESSING

INDEPENDENT MANUFACTURING FOR INDEPENDENT MUSIC

Cascade's mission is to produce high quality records for discerning artists and record labels. We are dedicated to making exceptional sounding records that will stand the test of time.

MASTERING
Vinyl mastering and lacquer cutting from experienced engineers to get your project started.

PRESSING
Our vintage 12" pressing equipment has been meticulously restored to produce high quality records.

PRINTING & PACKAGING
We work closely with our preferred print vendors who will handle all of your packaging needs.

"We have the equipment, expertise and resources to make your musical concept a physical reality."

WWW.CASCADERECORDPRESSING.COM
SALES@CASCADERECORDPRESSING.COM
PH: 503.974.9393

---

we shake our heads with quiet contempt

SOUND THE SIRENS

SOUNDTHESIRENS.COM

OFOPPOSITION.COM -- SQUAREOFOPPOSITION.COM -- SQUAREOFOPP

BAD SLEEP = s/t LP
Ten tracks of fizzing, poppy, straight ahead garage punk born of basements and dive bars, clocking in at less than 20 brilliant minutes.
Members of Parasol and Xylitol.
co-released with Stupid Bag and Specialist Subject (UK)

NIGHT WITCH - who's next LP
Pissed off punk from Florida with politics out front.
Red vinyl!

SMALL MESS / PRETTY LOUSY split 7"
Two of the Lehigh Valley's finest pressed for the first time.
300 copies, screened covers

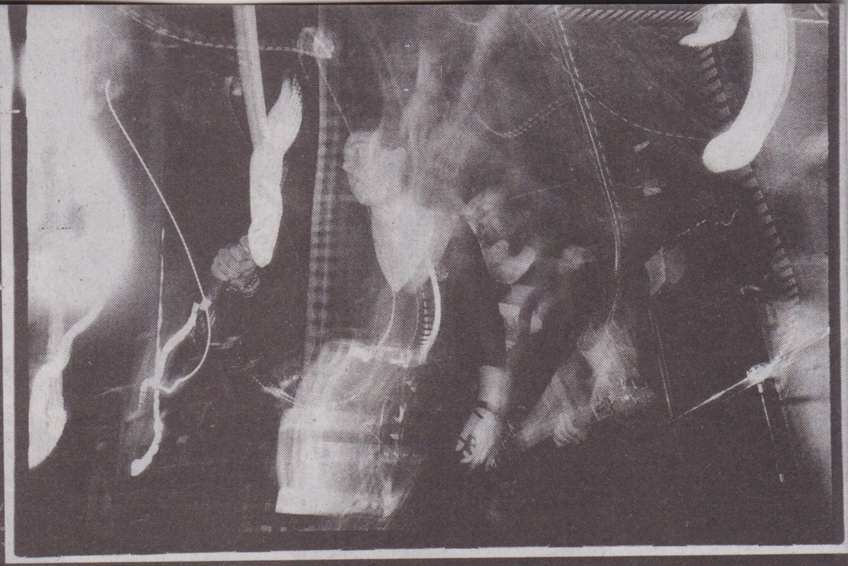
SQUARE OF OPPOSITION RECORDS

[ain't got the art for this one yet]

MORE FROM MISCHIEF BREW, SLINGSHOT DAKOTA, SNOWING, SPRAYNARD, AMYGDALA...
OFOPPOSITION.COM -- SQUAREOFOPPOSITION.COM -- SQUAREOFOPP

FRAMTID

EXIT ORDER



JESSE PONKAMO

BBEYE

BIG ZIT

CULO

Winston Smith is a graphic artist who has designed countless works for myriad notable acts (some real and some surreal). His original collage works and methods of cut-and-paste collage have influenced the aesthetics of scores of young, up-and-coming artists and punkers who have seized imagery from the art cops' hooves, back into their own hands.

Interview and introduction by Robert Reynolds. Images provided by Winston Smith.

MRR: What is your earliest memory of artistic engagement?

My mom was a really skilled artist and sculptress. So, I recall looking at her expensive art books and doing the predictable thing that most two or three-year-old toddlers do to adults' personal property: I scribbled in it. I'm surprised she didn't take my head off for that. But I was immediately supplied with stacks of scratch paper. Maybe that's when I realized that I wasn't fit for anything but being an artist.

As a kid I lived in Oklahoma. It was super bleak in the 1950s. I still recall the segregated busses and bathrooms and drinking fountains back then. My folks were Yankees so, thankfully, they brought me up with more open-minded values than a lot of my contemporaries. And since my mom had attended the Chicago Art Institute before the War she had this academic training and always encouraged my creative side. My dad was a farm boy from Maine so after he got drafted during the War he was glad to be turned loose somewhere that wasn't 20 below during most of the year.

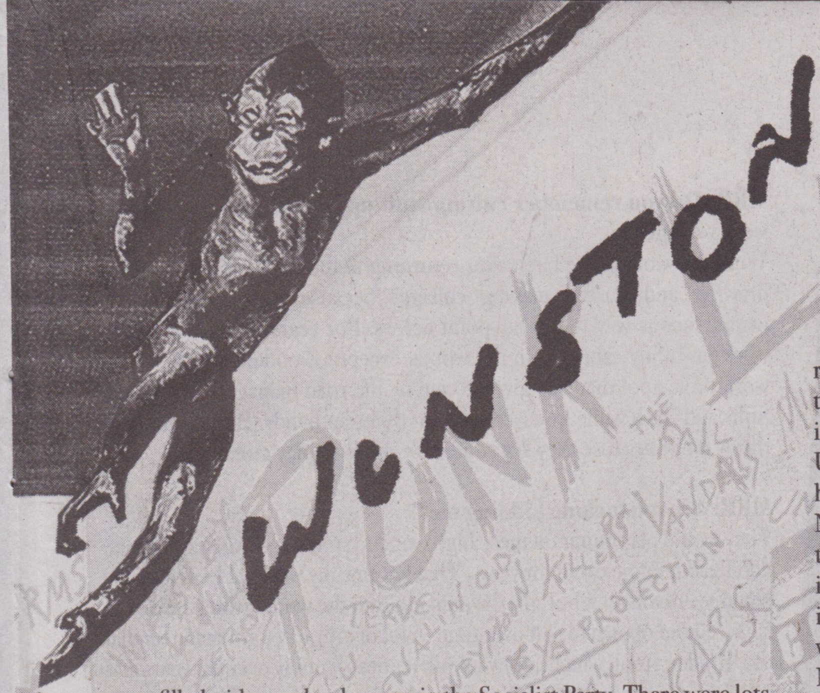
This was the "Bible Belt" during the very square 1950s so as kids we'd get dragged to church every week. I made good use of that time by drawing the dollar bills my folks had set out to drop into the collection plate. I drew so many sketches of currency I'm surprised I didn't become a counterfeiter. I think that's when I began associating money with religion. (Even at that young age I was very suspicious of established authority figures. That's remained a lifelong conviction.) Seeing the subtle and not-so-subtle connections between Money and Religion probably helped inspire my envisioning a crucifix made out of dollar bills because, after all, money is what we really worship in our society and that's what we are actually willing to sacrifice for.

MRR: Did you grow up in a political household or in a family with political history?

My dad was from the "shanty Irish" class of immigrants that settled in the great Northeast after the turn of the old century. He'd always worked on the farm and was an outdoorsman, hunting and fishing and just barely scraping by during the Depression, like everyone else. So he learned early on that bankers and the bosses were not to be trusted. He and my mom were born in the 1920s so that generation learned up front that the working class was there to be exploited. I got that attitude drilled into me as a kid so critical thinking was always how I was taught to approach things with your eyes wide open. Cynics are usually just disappointed idealists. Being a realist saves you a lot of heartbreak in the long run.

MRR: Do I remember you mentioning you had a family member connected to Haymarket?

I may have been in my twenties when I learned this and I got it from my grandmother. My mom's mother was very much Republican and she probably would've thought that Reagan was a soft-headed liberal! She wrote a letter to me once that was about my grandfather's father who was an Irish immigrant. After he survived the war between the states he was a decorated Union Officer. Compared to everyone else in our family up 'til then he was educated, in that he read everything he could read and was obviously a survivor (or I wouldn't be here to talk about it.) But he was very much a part of that era during the 1870s, '80s and '90s, when the Socialists were a big deal. And the Populist, socialist movement kind of started here more than anywhere else. Again, we're here and not back in Mother Russia; here, where all kinds of towns in Kansas, Ohio, and Illinois



WINSTON SMITH

were filled with people who were in the Socialist Party. There were lots of places that had socialist governments and mayors. Many of the farmers were socialists because they were fighting against the Corporatists and the big Trusts. By the time of the Russian Revolution, the media could paint the Socialist as being in league with the communist, "paint them red" so to speak and defame them. So my relative, I can't remember his name; apparently, he was a well-known figure in the Haymarket scene. My grandmother said he was like the outcast of the family. She said once he stole an armored train car and gave the money to the poor like Robin Hood. They had a picture of him in some Chicago paper in caricature because they didn't have photographs then, but it was him with a long, long beard to show how long he'd be sitting in jail for that. He apparently printed anarchist flyers and was a printer who printed his own zines essentially, promoting anarchism and socialism. I think he croaked during the Spanish influenza around 1919 or 1920.

MRR: Can you pinpoint anything that helped guide you toward aesthetics like dystopianism or collage?

All my life I've been a graphic artist or I'd draw pictures. I could see the potential of collage just mixing pictures that either were absurd, ironic, or enlightening because you could make something look like it's really happening without having to tell a really long story. For example, three old guys happily taking money off of a tree that's sprouting dollar bills from its limbs. Well, the original title for "The Money Tree" piece was, "Harvest Time for the Arms Builders" because they came out of an old 1943 bourbon ad. I just replaced apples with dollar bills because it was a magazine like *Fortune Magazine*. All the other magazines during Wartime like *Life* and *Saturday Evening Post* and were all filled with ideas about how everybody had to "do their part" in the war effort. Ideas like "Don't buy meat on the black market." You'd get ration coupons and you'd have to be judicious about where you spent them; it was a big public relations thing, even being directed at kids to turn in their toys for scrap metal for the war effort.

MRR: What made you realize that everything around you was not okay?

We had lots of old *Life* magazines from wartime and I would look at these things that were only about 15 or 20 years old at the time and I was surrounded by this material. We grew up with them and that's what people would look at for their information. I recall looking at a report about the quote-unquote "relocation," or the internment camps that they put Japanese-Americans into. People that had been here in America for fifty or a hundred years and they've been living in the United States for longer than my family had been living here and they had every right to have their farms in Oregon and Washington and Northern California. The government was ripping-off their farms and they were taken to concentration camps—but they never used that word in *Life*. I would think that it wasn't supposed to be that way, but there it was. So those kinds of things, in my mind, put together what lies and what subtle rewritings of history were taking place every week.

Now, Trump kidnaps the children of migrants and locks them up in concentration camps. But they call kidnapping "family separation" and concentration camps are "detention centers." It's Orwellian Newspeak. But it's still the same thing. And those kids will grow up hating America for her lack of justice and compassion. Trump and his willing followers are single-handedly creating more enemies for our country. Not much has changed since the old days.

MRR: Connecting realization to the craft, were you formally trained in the arts?

Only years and years later when I realized you didn't have to graduate from high school to go to college. In the late '60s, it was cheaper to go to school in Italy than it was in the United States, especially an art college or a university. I took painting courses and I was just terrible. I realized then that I don't have the brain skills or the procedural thinking that's required to execute proper oil paintings with turpentine and linseed oil and such. I just wanted instant gratification. I kind of became self-taught in those ways and turned a hundred and eighty degrees in my approach. It's like inventing your own instrument to play. If you do that then no one can tell you you're playing it wrong. So I invented my own art style and then no one could tell me that *I* was doing it wrong! That's my advice for young artists! Forget about what the classical masters tell you and invent your own style.

MRR: That's wonderful advice! I'm curious what led you to adopt the moniker of the main character in George Orwell's 1984?

When I came back to the United States after being gone for nearly seven years, I was so shocked at how much everything had changed in America. I had been naively thinking the world would stay the same as when I left. It went ahead and changed for the worse! At the time (in the mid 1970s) I was astonished by the level of technology being used for surveillance. I'd used different pen names over the years. I'd had several different funny pen names. Completely goofy stuff like Pinko Pallino or something totally unpronounceable. And everyone back then used oddball nicknames and stage names and pen names during the punk scene (like Bob Noxious, Penny Dreadful, Dinah Cancer, Jello Biafra, etc.). One of my pen names was Winston Smith because I was thinking of this totalitarian, Orwellian society that had developed in the U.S. during my absence: TV cameras surveilling people on the street and in every corridor, everyone reduced to a number, "Citizens" had

been replace with "Consumers," how people accepted it blindly and didn't think it was an intrusion on their privacy or a curtailing of their rights or anything!

Now it's everywhere; it's much more than the telescreen and all the cameras everywhere. Every purchase, everything you do at the supermarket or store, including how many miles you drive from one direction to the next or where you purchase gasoline, it's all tracked and everyone's information can be used against them at any time and probably will be, including information that doesn't even add up. The system's not safe, it's a rickety, giant, hand-built treehouse that's collapsing continuously and they spend more money on the adverts to tell you how strong and safe their bank or their institution is when virtually nothing is spent on actual security. But it's image more than substance that counts. Just look at how many times in recent years computer data on millions of people was "lost" or exposed due to hacks and glitches. (Remember the Equifax Disaster that exposed credit rating data of over half the adult population of the United States, though they claimed they'd keep it safe? Yeah, right. "Trust yer mechanic.")

MRR: Like The Society of the Spectacle where the image is essentially what matters.

Like a Potemkin village. We have this facade for the spectacle, where people look at television or social media and they think that everybody lives like rich celebrities. They aspire to a standard of living that isn't at all reality. It's not happening. They're trying to keep up with the Joneses and there really *aren't* any Joneses. The Joneses live as television characters. No one really lives like that except the upper 1%. Instead of being watched by one Big Brother we're all being surrounded by masses of little brothers. Big Brother isn't watching you. Big Brother is *selling* you.

MRR: Do you remember cutting stuff up in your room when you were younger?

Well, this would have been after returning to the US. I kind of stopped drawing and started making collages because it seemed like an instantaneous way to get my point across. For years, I had nothing to work on in my cabin up in the woods except a wooden stool. I would work on a stool that was given to me by the road manager for Crosby, Stills and Nash while I was a roadie for different bands. He was going to throw it out because they got some new stools to play guitar on...

MRR: Are you fucking kidding me?!

They would play guitar on these high wooden stools and I took one home and I had it in the cabin for years. That became my work table. It actually had deep divots in it because I would cut into the wood, which made the surface kind of turn to shit over time. A lot of my pieces got made on that old wooden stool, which is why I think it got so wobbly over the years and why I finally broke it up and put it in the fireplace as kindling. It finally served its purpose and came full circle!

MRR: You've heard about some kids who got kicked out of school for having your art books?

Several times over the years, I've heard about kids being suspended for having my books. One guy wrote me and told me about his brother being expelled for having the book at school. Other people had the book confiscated from them at school because of a teacher who saw what was in it. I heard about other kids getting suspended or having privileges withdrawn because they brought "this terrible thing." It's ridiculous, really. I was always amazed when you told me you would use my books in your class and that the kids would respond.

MRR: The kids responded incredibly to your books in my classes but the thought police are everywhere! That being said, have you ever gotten any heat or hate mail from anybody out there?

I've gotten a couple of hate mail pieces from the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. So, I always thought: "Oh good! I must have hit a nerve!"

MRR: You are pissing off the right people!

I was surprised that anyone would go to the trouble! Nazis must have a lot of time on their hands. Things that I don't like, I just don't think about.

MRR: Do you have a standard set of tools for creating?

I never use X-Acto knives anymore because one broke and almost took my iris out. Scalpels I've used, but they are very, very sharp and I am very, very clumsy. I have often sliced myself up. Between my cats and my own clumsiness, I'm surprised I haven't sliced an artery. I use a hardware blade that you can snap off whenever it gets dull. I never have used scissors. I know people who can use scissors and it's amazing to see people do that. Maybe if I had gone to medical school, I could have made some real money as a surgeon. I dropped out of art school instead. I have always lacked discipline. (They tried to warn me when I was young. Now it's too late). This should be a warning to young people. I'm a hopeless case. But at least I can say I'm a good example of a bad example. Perhaps in that way I am fulfilling my civic duty.

MRR: How much technology do you incorporate?

Razorblade and glue. In collage method, it is based on slow race horses. I know they make vegan glues and adhesives now, but the most common use hooves and marrow. (Collage is the only art form that relies on dead horses and other cattle. Why do you think Elmer's Glue has a cow for their logo?) So far I've managed to keep myself out of the "glue factory," as they say. Perhaps that's the only time I'll ever be useful. Maybe instead of being cremated, they can turn me in to the glue factory. Then I can at least come back as something useful for other artists and finally come full circle!

MRR: You've had social context in your visuals for at least three decades. Is there a period throughout that you would consider the bleakest politically or artistically?

Actually, four decades. (But who's counting, right?) But in answer to that I would have to say the Reagan Era with Daddy Bush. But it's not like any of it has gone away; it's only gotten worse. Images weren't much of a challenge with Reagan because he had this whole career as a movie star. Gangster and cowboy movies, him with his chimp, and even one where I found a picture of him in a Nazi uniform in a film with Errol Flynn (not a bad film, actually). I didn't even have to put him *in* the Nazi uniform! Now, you'd have to do that in Photoshop or something. I don't know how to do any of that stuff; I never learned Photoshop.

With Reagan, they just wanted somebody that had a history in the public eye as being a "nice" guy over the decades. It didn't matter what he was *really* like. Machiavelli wrote that it really doesn't matter how much of an asshole you are. What matters is only what people at a distance think; it doesn't matter if your close friends think you're a jerk. You just need to have trumpeters to blow your horn far and wide, so that people in the distance will think that you're this "golden prince." Look how well it works for Trump. He's his own Butt Trumpet. (By the way, I always thought that was a great band name. Where are they now?)

MRR: Will you tell me about how you came up with the logo for the Dead Kennedys?

I got a phone call one evening from Biafra, asking if there was any chance I could come up with an emblem for their band because I had already been working with him on the record insert posters for the *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* album. He was interested in having me design an insignia for the band. He was saying, "Can you make it sort of 'severe' looking?" A lot of my artwork up until then had been very angular and geometric because I'm not so good at drawing freehand. I would use rulers and straight edges. Many bands were going by their initials in those days. MDC, DRI, and Verbal Abuse (now *that* was a classic band logo!) were a few and he wanted it to have the initials D and K. I was sitting at the kitchen table. I had just finished a bowl of soup with a loaf of bread and some vino and was doodling on typing paper and the backs of old shooting targets.

I had a half dozen different ideas that were OK but just not the one. Finally, I rested, kind of zoning-out. Staring into the corner of the room is good because it can clear your mind. I'm right handed so I was looking at my left hand and the light on the table was at such an angle to cast a shadow over the scar that I've had in the palm of my hand since the year 1954, when I was a two-year-old. At that age, I was busy grabbing everything that was on the table and walking around with it. One day I had a saucer in my hand. I walked down the stone steps to the backyard

porch and stumbled on them, breaking the saucer in my hand and cutting it wide open (and freaking the shit out of my mom). I was okay, but there was blood everywhere. They had to get my hand stitched up. I had seven stitches in my hand; I'm looking at it right now. The top one forms a perfect Greek Delta symbol, almost like a triangular design. The lower part extends out on the other side. The *other* side is not part of a stitch, it's just part of the wrinkles in the hand, but it looks vaguely like the letters D and K. That's what gave me the idea when I was working on the thing that night.

So, I made several that were just like masking tape things, with only a few lines; I used pencils and pens. I didn't have a ruler; I used the edge of a book like a straightedge and over the next couple of days, I made a couple of different versions and went to the Rexall (we didn't have Kinkos then). It was a drugstore where you could make these crappy photocopies for ten cents. I cut them out and then replaced the backgrounds with a brick pattern and a few alternative patterns (rain drops, grey dots, etc.). I I got them from a pattern book that was in the public domain from the library. I called Biafra a day or two later and said, "I've got a piece for you to check out". He said, "We've got a show in Berkeley, so let's meet at the Café Med."

We were upstairs and the friend of mine who introduced me to Biafra was with me and we were having sandwiches. (I thought it might be a good idea to have a witness in case he didn't like it and threw the silverware at me.) So Biafra comes up, I show him the DK logo. He looks at it and says, "That's *it!*" He was late for sound check so my friend and I stayed and finished our sandwiches. We wandered down to the venue an hour or so later. We got there ahead of most people and at one point, I went back to the men's room and all over the walls were DK logos done in Magic Marker. And I thought to myself, "Oh, Biafra has already been here! Gee, I guess he likes it!" To see my design graffitied on walls was the ultimate stamp of approval.

Biafra and I first met, right around Christmas or New Year's at some point earlier. We met up at the Mabuhay Gardens. But because my friend and I got there so late, the Dead Ks had just walked offstage. Biafra and I went out foraging for food until something like four in the morning and I showed him a bunch of pictures I'd brought with me. That night, he saw the "Cross of Dollars" collage I'd made back in 1978 of a 3-D piece I'd made in 1977.

It was almost twenty years later when Biafra told me he didn't really have a record in mind, but when he saw the artwork, he wanted to make a record, based on the artwork. I thought, "Wow!" I wish I had known that, and he said, "If I had told you that, your head would have been all swelled up!" I was impressed, pleased, and honored, but he was thinking correctly in that; had I known that my artwork had inspired the *In God We Trust Inc.* EP, I probably would have become more mercenary in my pricing of artwork. (So, in true punk rock fashion, I've been effectively living hand-to-mouth over the years because I didn't want to be accused of being a "greedy artist"! Instead, I was a "starving artist"! (Some girlfriends didn't like that too much. Who wants to date a starving artist??)

So, until now I've almost never told anybody about the scar in my hand but I've been looking at it all my life. I've had the DK logo right in the palm of my hand since 1954 and I'm stuck with it. I've had this long before any of the band members met. And long before Dead Kennedys existed as a band or were even a twinkle in Biafra's eye. So all along I've had the inspiration for it right there in my kitchen and will be buried with it—unless my wife has me stuffed. Always a possibility.

When I say I've suffered blood, sweat and tears for my art I really mean it. Lots of sweating to create the artwork, lots of blood (starting back in 1954) and lots of tears—but mostly tears of laughter. I don't know what I would have done had Punk Rock not reared its ugly head when it did. I came along just in time.

It has indeed been a long, weird trip, sometime with a few near disastrous twists and turns over the years, and lot of unexpected surprises, but it's been mostly good. And encountering most of the people that I've had the pleasure and honor to meet has enriched my life to no end. I wouldn't trade it for a box at the opera.

MRR: I want to thank you for being willing to share all of this with us. It's safe to say that your impact on the freak scene at large is vastly invaluable and I'm grateful for your limitless contributions. Last question. With the punk nostalgia market booming, what do people not understand about the first wave?

It seems to me that because of the way rock'n'roll is marketed as a commodity, at least in the US, people here see the punk rock movement as a fad, or a style, or fashion, or whatever. You know, I think people in other countries that were/are struggling with actual totalitarianism, people have had to really take their lives in their hands to trade records amongst themselves. Some of it was just commercial stuff from the west but it was still forbidden, so they were really dedicated to it. Whereas, Americans had the privilege to *not* risk life and limb to listen to some silly record. At least more so than, say, the beat era or then the hippy-dippy era or the drug freak era, I think the punk thing endured much more, even though it wasn't co-opted for the mainstream for a long time because it was too gnarly and too ugly. It wasn't like Flower Power, having imagery that in the '60s and '70s was completely taken over by the mainstream because it was decorative and fashionable. The corporations had to wait a couple years, until after the shock of long-haired student protesters had passed, so they could dissociate themselves from people who were against the war. They had to develop an idea, where it was safely okay to wear your hair that way or wear a muumuu or love beads. With scruffy punks, it was all the rage, but before then, it was about anything that people could get their hands on that wasn't cliché and wasn't the mainstream. That's when it becomes too easy to go down to the local mall and buy whatever studded bracelets are made in some Hong Kong sweat shop. It becomes kind of "insta-punk." A lot of people truly still believe in

the music, its message, and, of course it was much more about performance in the beginning and the theatrical version of performance. I think punk rock was single-handedly responsible for bringing back Vaudeville! You had people doing totally silly things on stage; some of it was art and some of it was just for laughs.

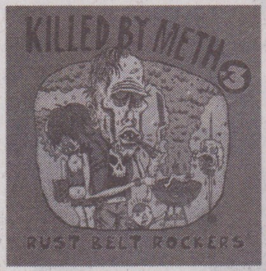
MRR: Like Dada theater!

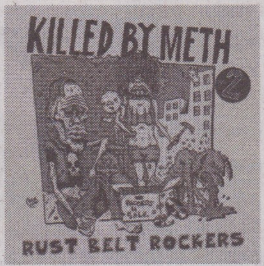
What I saw in the late 70s was the closest thing to what the Dada era must have been like. (I wasn't there. After all, I'm not *that* old.) Something that was a protest movement in and of itself. I saw this as a resurgence of that sensibility and people were just having a rollicking good time! It wasn't about going out and smashing heads; it was about people cooperating, and in my case I got involved by volunteering. I would tell any young people (or old geezers like me)—if you just have a chance, you should *volunteer.* Volunteering your time and skills is a sure fire way to make connections and meet interesting people who are outside your immediate circle. And, it *helps* other people. It may sound corny but I truly believe that the reason we're all here is to encourage one another. Life is hard enough and it's much harder for people all round the world who don't have the advantages people in America and western Europe have. Volunteering expands your horizons and broadens your mind. For me it was life-changing.

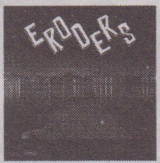
Around 1978, I was volunteering my art and layout skills for an organization called Rock Against Racism which started in Great Britain but spread to the US. We put on lots of punk shows and events in San Francisco and raised money for different causes. And the shows were actually *good shows!* Around 25 bands would play all in the same day, so everyone had something like five minutes on stage. And even if they made fools of themselves, it was fun. And that was their five minutes of fame! (Or *shame*, in some cases.) You know, get off the stage and let the next person get up and keep going; keep spreading the message. Whatever click or spark would come from that was organic! Things grow in a certain soil and these weeds *grew!* The soil was just rank enough to feed them...

Visit WinstonSmith.com to view more artistic mayhem.

MAXIMUM TRASH







HOW MANY	CAT. NO.	PUNK	PRICE $	¢
	014	v/a KILLED BY METH #3 LP	15	00
	012	KLAZO LP	14	00
	011	v/a KILLED BY METH #2 LP	15	00
	013	RED MASS EP	6	50
	010	NEO NEOS EP	5	50
	009	ERODERS EP	6	50
	006	FLESH RAG EP	5	25

TOTAL $ USD ________

(please print clearly)

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

CITY........................ STATE..............

MAIL THIS ADVERTISEMENT AND $5 S/H TO:

IT'S TRASH! RECORDS 173 PRICE ST. LONDON, ON. N5Z 2J6 CANADA

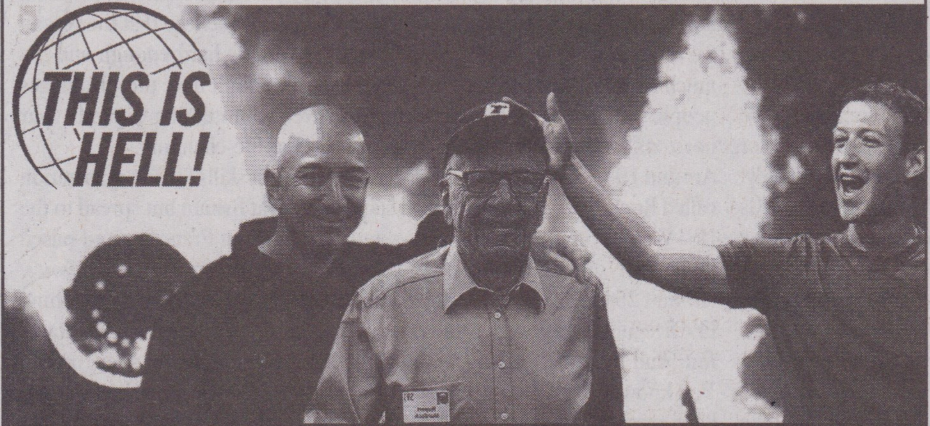
itstrashrecords.bandcamp.com

This is not the media

this is not a pipe
this is not happening
this is not what i expected
this is not a game
this is not a swan song
this is not my hat
this is not my beautiful house
this is not berlin
this is not a real person website
this is not a love song

Report inappropriate predictions

Manufacturing Dissent Since 1996!

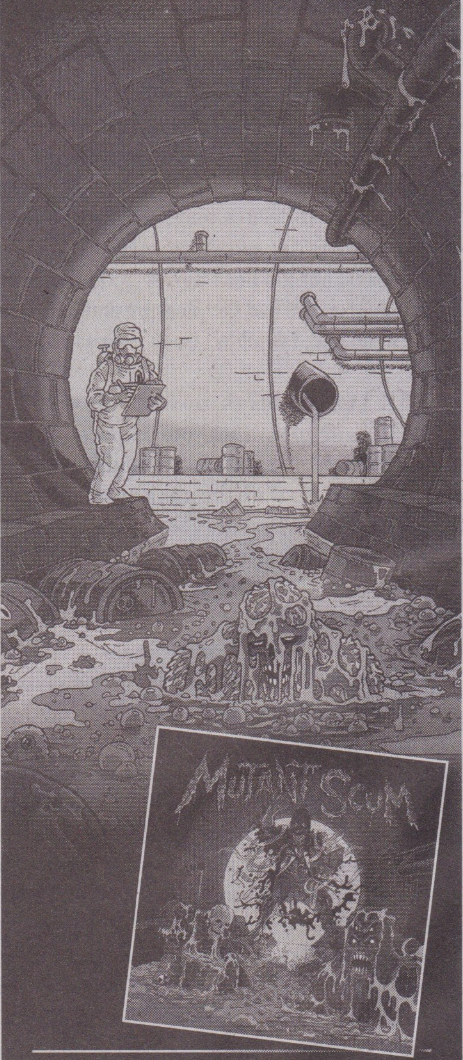


This is Hell! Saturdays, 9AM-1PM US CST on WNUR 89.3FM Chicago and podcast to the world shortly after. Find us at soundcloud.com/this-is-hell
A special, one-hour version of the show airs Sundays at 11AM Central on WLPN: Lumpen Radio and Sundays at 11AM Pacific on KRFP: Radio Free Moscow.
Want This Is Hell! on your local radio? Get in touch, its free.

They said there were underground colonies living beneath the streets of Brooklyn...
THEY WERE RIGHT!

They say they were human...
THEY WERE WRONG!

MUTANT SCUM is under the city... AND THEY'RE NOT STAYING DOWN THERE ANY MORE!



Full length LP out now on Handstand Records under special permission of the Society of Estuary Waste Education and Research.

mutantscum.bandcamp.com
handstandrecords.com

CIEMO

Ciemo is a humble anarchist punk band whose two members are based in two quite different places—Santi in the tropical Canary Islands next to Morocco and Teodoro in the cold La Rioja, the Scandinavia of the Spanish State. These two mammals choose abrasive hardcore punk as a mean of total expression trying to keep as close to the earth as they can. Their music is physical and their anger is real. They self release their cassettes and put a lot of love on it, they are against people clapping at their shows and hate the modern world, yet they were so nice as to borrow a computer to answer my questions. They are not a band you'll discover in Bandcamp but if you send them a letter you'll probably start one of the most interesting friendships of your life.

Interview and introduction by Paco Mus. Photos provided by Fidel Gutierrez. Art by Teodoro Hernández. Translation by Sydney Barnett and Ricardo Flores.

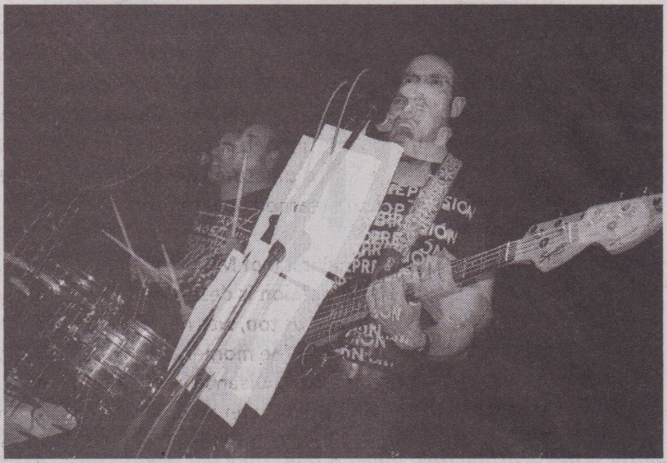
MRR: Ciemo is without a doubt an unusual band in 2019. Divided by thousands of kilometers and living in populations far from what would be considered the nuclei of hardcore. A few self-released tape cassettes and no presence whatsoever on the internet. A very abrasive sound and a critical message. How did Ciemo form and more importantly, what does it mean to have a radical hardcore band the way you carry it to this day? Is there something more beyond the noise?

Ciemo was formed in 2013 in Tenerife, an island of the Canary Islands archipelago, north of Africa, a Spanish colony much to the disgrace of these lands. Two of us used to play in another hardcore band called Cisma; there was a profound inability for the four members to spend time with each other, things happened around us, both personal and political, that affected how the band functioned and everything went to shit. There was a musical gap too: two members that could play their instruments and the other two that were musically useless. At the end Ciemo was made up of the inept and intolerant part of Cisma.

Executing a Hardcore Radikal band in the year 2019 is to put limits to dishonor. Punk is progressively losing everything that made it honorable. With Ciemo we don't want to allow the defeat of what we still think is an alive and rebellious movement. I am not capable of valuing the wear and tear of punk in all its fairness, but I note a global counterrevolution in this movement. There was a time in which punk was clearly an aggression that the system didn't want to allow, bands that were coming from the underground couldn't play at commercial venues and it wasn't easy to sell records in stores—at least we had the glory of rejection. Now, capital has introduced itself in our movement, poisoning it with aesthetic matters. The old violence and dislike of punk is now a trend. If you have a firm political stance you are expelled or isolated from the scene and considered boring or intolerant. This is constantly backed by the immense majority in punk, that either protect their own interests or just look to the other side and because of that, those of us who embrace Hardcore Radikal run the risk of coming across as (even amongst ourselves) paranoid, snobby, pathetic, or even fascist.

After trying to fit a lot of the horribleness of what happens in punk you put yourself in hiding, in a not very visible place, Santiago in La Laguna and Teodoro in Arnedo and from there, without the illusion of a big and well-nourished punk scene, and without its meddling, we shape our lives, always trying to be critical of punk but especially critical of ourselves and of this shit system that surrounds us. We feel that from our place we can stick out our heads, not too much though, and then come back later to shelter ourselves. It is not about wailing everyday against power—if we repeat it too often there will be those that consider it an aesthetic matter and what we want is to bring forward solidarity and nonconformity.

Ciemo has put out two tapes. The recordings were done by us and the tapes released with our money. We are terrible sellers—we gave away almost all of our copies; what we have left we forgot in a box. We don't play in places where someone is going to make money from our presence. We make an effort for our lyrics and music to not be recuperated by anybody. Our



shows are put together by us or our dear friends. This is like many other bands, I would think.

Playing Hardcore Radikal, aside from making your music sound like shit, is about not serving the money regime, is about not using the privileges that western punks have to take a plane every month to play a show in one of the capitals of the world. Although now that I think about it, Hardcore Radikal bands are not often asked to play in those capitals, and if they are, they tell the one who has a thousand dollars for plane tickets: "Take your money stained with death and spend it on something else that isn't inviting a band of punks to yell against that very same deathstained money, scoundrel!"

We know we go totally unnoticed—punk doesn't need Ciemo in the web, however the web could do with more and more shit in their net, more and more willing assholes contributing with information that is only noise.

We are nothing on the internet, because the internet is nothingness, it's a scam almost as big as money, which is also nothing. Where we should be is in our town and not online. Being part of Ciemo is knowing that when you are not performing with Ciemo you also have to honor punk and anarchy in regards of how incoherent we can be. Playing with Ciemo is not to accept the individualistic and egocentric drifts of punk, it is to feel part of something and renounce being the protagonist. It's to have a bad attitude but also two generous arms to embrace the ones you have next to you. There should be something more than just noise, because Ciemo takes very little room in our lives. In Ciemo there is life, and when there is punk and life there is tension and problems.

MRR: You both have pretty quiet lives away from the noise of the city. I do not know if I'm wrong, but I get the feeling that you're trying to set a pace of life more in line with decline by escaping the hustle and bustle of the city. Why do you choose to express yourself with such a primitive and abrasive sound? Don't you think that's contradictory? Or are you so poisoned by punk that you need that escape valve?

We can't live in a big city, we both know it and are aware that that concrete kills the almost extinct animal we carry inside. We identify ourselves more with anti-development than with Degrowth. This regime that we know has been developed from a collaboration between Capital and the State, and both are sustained in the economy, the unions and politics. From the hyper-development of those elements came the welfare state, and the workers are left with the lesser of evils and let this shit replace DIY and the possibility of Socialism. The masses, punks included, are locked in our private lives, willingly receiving the abundance of merchandise, leaving our ability to decide in the hands of professionals. How are we not going to be against development if patriarchy, the State, and money have never been this strong? Punks have been integrated in the system like the good consumers we are, consumers of records, drugs, clothes, travel. Daily life is destroyed, working class culture was the culture of the exploited, punk culture gives you the feeling that it is the culture of the privileged artist and not the one of an oppressed mammal.

We have made progress in making it appear that the whole technique is neutral, and so punks swallow whatever crap they offer us. There has never been a profound and firm positioning about these new technologies that we have been offered in order to distribute our culture. They gave us social media and the punks grew proud in creating their fake virtual communities. They offered us buying and selling through the internet in multinational platforms and we didn't think twice; we put punk on sale on the internet. Does anybody think that putting punk on the internet will make the internet better? In the past, collective projects were collective because they had the ambition to create or own infrastructure, and there was a lot of work to do and a lot of doors to knock if you wanted to release a record or a book. Today the work, the infrastructure, is already done and the door you have to knock is the internet. Nowadays you don't need people, the punk community has been replaced by the internet community. You on your own, you as an individual can be alone right now and reach everyone with the internet to the detriment of collective projects. These are the symptoms of growth that Ciemo is against. Being against development, means at least wishing to de-globalize, de-industrialize, de-urbanize, but punk has never been so happily globalized as it is now, and it's comfortable in the city and also in the industry—the oil one seems like its favorite.

Just like in the conventional world of workers, in punk, the main production strength (we never wanted punk to be productive) is digital technology, which has displaced all that manual labor that punk once felt so proud of. Punk doesn't form a side world alternative in our society, with its own values, traditions and rules, at least not our territory. You can't establish a community with its own identity—its identity is simply the same as that huge ambiguous and classless rock music. Capitalism and its individualistic and competitive values have permanently installed themselves in punk and there isn't a lot of effort to change that.

Yes Paco, contradictions, Ciemo has almost all of them, we ask the world's forgiveness. As far as how primitive our sound is...How else are we going to be able to play? You know how little expertise we have with instruments. We can only do basic noise, played by the instruments that have always been part of the punk tradition. But let it be known that with every day we might be more and more far away from them.

Punk has poisoned us in terms of how unhealthy this movement

we know is, but we can't abandon it. Perhaps it doesn't suit us as bad. There is poison, there is addiction...We can't not be used to punk, we don't look for it either, we have been punks since we first learned about it, and it's also a responsibility exercise (of Christian responsibility perhaps?) to remain in it in a critical way. And with some resignation, but with a lot of pleasure, we continue making that noise from which we haven't learned how to progress.

MRR: This interview is for the final issue of MRR in its physical form. Another project that ends. What opinion is deserving for something that took so much time and that, for us too, was never something we thought would disappear? I don't see the moment where everything physical is not only obsolete but also a nuisance being that far away, which is a total contradiction because I am an accumulator of shit. Do you think it makes sense to produce CDs and tapes, print fanzines or screenprint shirts in the way that we have?

I think that in the way that we do it it definitely makes no sense. This punk thing is very complex, you know, Paco, we are from a small town, and there was a time in which we yearned and needed to have access to records that sounded punk, to written material that talked about punk, and we couldn't, it was very hard to have access to that. We wanted a lot of records and tapes, wanted the possibility of a punk band that could tour all around the world, networks that could unite a global movement, and there are some that think we have all that now and we complain just for the sake of protesting. It is not true, we have a substitute of those projects, we only have a superficial fantasy. Have we accomplished punk being accessible all over the world? Or has it been the capital, because it realized that it was possible to monetize protests, even the most marginal of them? We bet for the latter. We haven't made punk something popular, we have made punk become a product that can be found in any music or fashion supermarket.

Punk has never released as much shit as it has now, and that shit has never been so clearly merchandise. Punk is more concerned now about being part of a global circulation of goods than criticizing the fact that punks from countries in the south of the planet can't circulate their records as easily. Chesterton used to say, "Men might fast forty days for the sake of hearing a blackbird sing." Ciemo interprets that as, on the contrary, a punk only needs a demo on Bandcamp to travel the world getting drunk with other idiots.

I think that it makes sense to come up with our own texts and music, distribute them in close circles, trying to be a part of most of the processes. Because we need to merge manual labor with intellectual work, we can only have a holistic way of thinking if we try to put all this into practice, if we play those things, if we absorb and live the material. Knowing the effort that producing something requires makes us critical of it, being aware of the destruction it implies helps us to stop it when required. But now not only do we not print our thoughts, like those anarchists did with their clandestine Minervas, we don't see the machines that print our texts or the ones that press our records, nor do we know the people who make them. Orders are done by the click of a mouse. The relationship is with the click, not with human beings. And progressively fewer people will have a material relationship with us, with our own exploitation.

MRR disappearing is a shame, another sign that a loss of traditional knowledge is developing, knowledge that used to create a web, a community, collective work, communication amongst people, a physical place to go, a refuge with more truth than the internet. Everything staying on the internet seems bullshit to me, the internet is a fragile place very dependent on the energy and technology that capital owns. Self-criticism should be done though—I recognize that it's been a while since I bought MRR.

MRR: Let's talk a little about music. When I listen to Ciemo a lot of stuff comes to mind. A sound very crude anchored in the traditions of Nordic hardcore with the idiosyncrasy of the bands of the European golden era but with a total lack of respect for musical norms. Do you think there is room for evolution within punk? Are you tired of the boring uniformity of the sound of punk?

To be punk is not to be an imbecile—you know what being an imbecile is? Having someone shout: "Hey you! The one with the Discharge t-shirt!", and all of the sudden hundreds of punks from Spain, USA, Peru, Singapore, Greece, Russia, or Japan turn around only to see the same imbecile face with the same t-shirt.

Sometimes I think the fact that the leaves are green or the mountains of my town red is something that will continue to be that way through time, but that green, that red of the leaves of the mountains, of the places where they are and the springs and winters of each year are always unique and new. Repetition in a set of rocks can be exciting and new in each of them. We are told that everything that repeats itself is dead, but what's new, does it come from life or death? Our movements, the posture of our body, changes when we notice the possible failure, the danger, or simply we are tired of them. We can also appreciate that the older retired woman who walks the same kilometers every day by the Riverside of the Cicados River does it because she enjoys it and deems it necessary, perhaps because repetition is not absence of life but abundance of vitality for that retiree. The sun rises every morning and doesn't get tired of it, repetition can happen for millions of years and be something voluntary and vital, but it can also stop at times. The human being has remained on Earth for millions of years and every new birth is a notable event, for better or worse—let punk be something for good! Let punk be something genuine on its own, by its own vital inertia, not by some aesthetic identity. Let it be each of our actions as well as an exercise to transform reality, a proof of humility and modesty.

We have to appreciate the possibilities that punk in the opulent north has by taking responsibility for them and showing solidarity with those in other parts of the world that don't have the same possibilities. Surely the fact that we can travel by plane once a month around the world has an impact on whether there is a coup in Venezuela because of the oil or that in Mexico there are people being killed at the border. Would it be that each of one of the goods we have collected is because of dispossession in other places in the world?

Yes, we like Nordic hardcore from the '80s a lot, but we also like hardcore from Latin America or the Spanish State, whether it comes from the past or from now.

MRR: One of the most recurring conversation topics I have with people my age that have been tied to punk for a long time is the complaint that everything has changed, nothing is the same, and everything is devoid of content. Although it's true they don't lack reason, I also think that staying anchored in the past leads to nothing but an exercise of nostalgia. Are you part of those being let down? Did you expect punk to be the one to answer all of your questions and when you discovered that that isn't punk, did you feel lied to? Or do you think there is still room for idealism despite the authentic attitude of the "true punk"?

Punk can be lived in a romantic way and it can arouse the same rejection and anger that a failed love affair can.

I think that it is very common to idealize punk and to think it's going to give us all the answers. At least before its enormous communicative component was obvious, where bands would worry about their lyrics being readable and understandable. Nowadays there is a lot of artistic noise, people write songs imitating an old formula and what gets to our ears is a piece from a known mold that

has been poorly finished, made with haste, without attention to detail and with the desire of it reaching the whole world without no time to lose. A substitute that expresses nothing. I'm not saying that old punk answered a lot of questions, but this substitute is not telling us anything.

Either way, expecting something from punk today makes sense because it has made many promises, but in 2019 believing in them is solely our responsibility. I think that just like every counterculture I have known they are already part of the culture, that culture needs counterculture in order to shape itself, just like the democratic system needs culture.

Thinking today (or maybe always) about a "real punk" is an elitist exercise that I don't see as very healthy, they tend to be self-referential and self-complacent thoughts with which you have to be very careful, and they are very common in all of us. It's dangerous that while looking for that individual authenticity we start looking at other punks as enemies, it's absurd that with all the misfortunes happening in the world we self-indulge with the stubborn idea that "people are imbeciles." Basically, I think that there is a lot to be against, and punk has always seemed an ideal place to think, and thinking is always thinking against someone, even someone from punk itself.

In my hometown, in my personal life with other punks from Arnedo and elsewhere, I keep seeing those battles against conformism and oppression. I don't doubt there is a place for this. It doesn't matter how tamed and boring the impulses of today's punk are, I firmly know that not everything is done or finished, let alone punk, which comes from a radical critique and from an anti-everything vomit. You can't write this off yet which is why there is a lot of effort from the system to finally kill it.

It's a bad vice for punk in recent years, bounced and distrusted, to lash out only against punk itself. It seems like once we've felt betrayed by it, once we've been hurt and cheated by it, because as innocent idealists we had faith that punk would change the world and change us, so realizing that is not the case we lunge at punk without mercy, wanting to inflict the same damage we have suffered onto others. One of the saddest factors of social stability is precisely that, that the hatred of the oppressed is often aimed towards those who are also oppressed.

We believe that it is healthy to be hyper-critical with punk, but when, how and where? All the time? Anywhere? Fighting with each other because of nuances is sad, it's sad to clash with the anti-system and not with the system. Punk and its internal functioning can be an addictive and never-ending debate. Let's look at this interview for example, if it's happening it's because Ciemo incites these questions, but everything revolves around our battered punk, instead of creating strategies against the system.

Simone Weil once said: "Exclude the strength of the weak in order to support that of the strong."

MRR: Let's talk again about the places where you live. Santi, tell us about what happened with the Canary Islands, I think out of there little is known, what's even more I wonder if people even know where the Islands are located. You both played used to play music in CISMA and historically there have always been really good bands there. And Teo, what's happening in Arnedo?

In Arnedo, uff, what is most interesting to me is the bond I have with few but good friends, and in that regard, we are trying to push through our core union of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo, a consumption group. We sometimes play with Irreparables, and when Santi comes here we play with Ciemo. This is not a very exciting place for punk. We sometimes book shows, but they always have to have an anti-authoritarian content or be more than just music. We organize cycles or debate with a libertarian perspective, there is also a feminist radio show called "Voz Ultravioleta" (Ultraviolet Voice) and another one that aims to be anarchist called "Hardcore Radikal."

In Tenerife there is very little or pretty much nothing punk related, or maybe I see it that way because of the way I understand punk.

A few years ago, me and my friend Txemi started a collective to book shows for punk bands like DOOM, ACTIVE MINDS, THE ASTRONAUTS, ZOUNDS. We were able to do it ourselves thanks to Txemi and his vegan nights (with his music and kitchen project called "Carabrecol") that are held once a month more or less in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which is where he lives, and also thanks to "Camisetas del Destierro", which is a screen-printing project that I have to this day. For me, this has been the most interesting stuff that has been done during my 15 years of living in Tenerife.

Thanks to Paco and MRR for their wish to know about us, for all those decades of effort in making punk a welcoming place. Salud y anarquía.

MRR: Ciemo es sin duda una banda unusual en 2019. Divididos por miles de kilómetros y viviendo en poblaciones alejadas de lo que se consideran los núcleos del hardcore patrio. Con un par de casetes autoeditadas y sin ninguna presencia en la web. Con un sonido muy abrasivo y un mensaje muy critico. Como se forma Ciemo y mas importante que significa llevar a cabo una banda de Hardcore Radikal de la manera que la lleváis a día de hoy? Hay algo mas allá del ruido?

Ciemo se forma en el 2013, en Tenerife, una isla del archipiélago Islas Canarias, en el norte de África, colonia española para la desgracia de estas tierras. Dos de nosotros tocábamos en otra banda de hardcore llamada Cisma, hubo una incapacidad profunda para convivir entre los cuatro componentes, ocurrieron cosas a nuestro alrededor, personales y políticas que nos afectaron en el funcionamiento de la banda y todo se fue a la mierda. Había también diferencias en lo musical, dos componentes que podían tocar sus instrumentos y otros dos que eran unos inútiles en lo musical. Finalmente Ciemo se formó con el sector inepto e intolerante de Cisma.

Llevar a cabo una banda de hardcore radikal en el año 2019 es poner límites al deshonor. El punk está perdiendo progresivamente todo lo que le hacía honorable. Desde Ciemo no queremos permitir la derrota de lo que todavía pensamos es un movimiento vivo y rebelde. No soy capaz de valorar el desgaste del punk en su justa medida, pero advierto una contrarrevolución global en este movimiento. Hubo un tiempo en el que el punk era claramente una agresión que el sistema no quería permitir, las bandas que venían de abajo ni podían tocar en salas comerciales ni era fácil vender sus discos en las tiendas, al menos teníamos la gloria del rechazo. Ahora, el capital se ha introducido en nuestro movimiento envenenándolo de cuestiones estéticas. La vieja violencia y desagrado del punk es ahora tendencia. Si tienes una posición política firme eres expulsado, o aislado de la escena por aburrido o intolerante. Esto es constantemente respaldado por la inmensa mayoría del punk, que o protege sus intereses o mira hacia otro lado y por eso quienes abrazamos el hardcore radikal corremos el riesgo de parecer (incluso ante nosotros mismos) paranoicos, snobs, patéticos o incluso fascistas.

Después de intentar encajar mucho de lo nefasto que pasa en el punk te pones a resguardo, en un lugar no muy visible, Santiago en La Laguna y Teodoro en Arnedo y desde allí, sin ilusión por una escena punk grande y bien nutrida y sin la intromisión de la misma, conformamos nuestras vidas siempre intentando ser críticos con el punk pero sobretodo críticos con nosotros mismos y con este sistema de mierda que nos envuelve.

Sentimos que desde nuestro lugar podemos sacar la cabeza a veces, no demasiado, y volver después a cobijarnos, que no es cosa de todos los días desgañitarnos contra el poder, que si lo repetimos a menudo habrá quien lo considere una cuestión estética y nosotros lo que queremos es suscitar solidaridad e inconformismo.

Ciemo hemos sacado dos cintas, las grabaciones están hechas por nosotros, las cintas editadas con nuestro dinero. Somos malos vendedores, regalamos casi todas las copias, las que nos quedan las olvidamos en una caja. No tocamos en lugares donde alguien hará dinero con nuestra presencia. Nos esforzamos en que nuestras letras y música no puedan ser recuperadas por nadie. Los conciertos los montamos nosotros o nuestros queridos amigos. Como muchas otras bandas, quiero pensar.

Tocar Hardcore Radikal, aparte de que tu música suene a mierda, es no servir al régimen del dinero, es no usar los privilegios que tienen los punks occidentales de viajar en avión todos los meses para tocar un concierto en una de las capitales del mundo. Aunque ahora que lo pienso, las bandas de hardcore radikal no suelen ser invitadas a tocar en esas capitales, y si lo son, le dicen a quien tiene dos mil dólares para billetes de avión: Coge tu dinero manchado de muerte y gástalo en otra cosa que no sea invitar a una banda de punkis a gritar contra ese mismo dinero manchado de muerte, ¡sinvergüenza!.

Sabemos que pasamos completamente desapercibidos, no le hace falta al punk que Ciemo esté en la web, sin embargo si que le hace falta a la web más y más mierda en sus redes, más y más gilipollas voluntarios contribuyendo con información que es solo ruido.

No somos nada en Internet, porque Internet es la nada, es un timo casi tan grande como el dinero, que es nada. Es en nuestro pueblo donde tenemos que estar y no en lo virtual.

Ser parte de Ciemo es saber que cuando no estás tocando en Ciemo también hay que honrar al punk y a la anarquía en la medida de lo incoherentes que podemos llegar a ser. Tocar en Ciemo es no aceptar las derivas individualistas y egocéntricas del punk, es sentirse parte de algo y renunciar a ser el protagonista. Es tener mala hostia pero dos brazos generosos para abrazar a quien tienes al lado.

Debe haber algo más que ruido, porque Ciemo ocupa muy poco espacio en nuestras vidas. En Ciemo hay vida, y donde hay punk y vida hay tensión y problemas.

MRR: Ambos lleváis vidas bastante tranquilas alejadas del ruido de la urbe. No se si me equivoco pero me da la sensación que intentáis llevar un ritmo de vida mas acorde con el decrecimiento huyendo del bullicio y

el ruido de la urbe. Por que elegís expresaros con un sonido tan primitivo y abrasivo? No creéis que es una contradicción? O estáis tan envenenados por el punk que ñecesitáis esa válvula de escape?

No podemos vivir en una gran urbe, ambos conocemos la gran ciudad y sabemos que ese asfalto mata al ya casi extinto animal que llevamos dentro.

Nos identificamos más con el antidesarrollismo que con el decrecentismo. Este régimen que conocemos se ha desarrollado a partir de una colaboración entre el Capital y el Estado, y ambos se sustentan en la economía, los sindicatos y la política. Del hiperdesarrollo de estos salió el estado de bienestar, y los currelas nos quedamos con el mal menor y dejamos que esta mierda reemplazara a la autogestión y la posibilidad de socialismo.

Las masas, punkis incluidos, estamos encerrados en nuestra vida privada, hemos recibido de muy buen grado la abundancia de mercancías y hemos dejado nuestra capacidad de decisión en manos de profesionales. ¿Cómo no vamos a estar en contra del desarrollo si nunca el patriarcado, el estado y el dinero han sido tan fuertes?.

Los punkis hemos sido ya integrados al sistema como buenos consumidores que somos, de discos, de droga, de ropa, de viajes. La vida cotidiana está destruida, la cultura obrera era la cultura de los explotados, la cultura punk da la sensación de que es la cultura del artista privilegiado y no la de un mamífero oprimido.

Hemos progresado en que parezca que toda la técnica es neutra, y así los punkis nos tragamos cualquier mierda que nos ofrecen. Nunca ha habido un posicionamiento profundo y firme sobre estas nuevas tecnologías que nos han ofrecido para distribuir nuestra cultura. Nos entregaron las redes sociales y los punkis se enorgullecieron de crear sus falsas comunidades virtuales. Nos ofrecieron la compra y venta por Internet en plataformas multinacionales y no lo pensamos dos veces; pusimos el punk a la venta en Internet. ¿Alguien ha pensado que el punk en Internet hará que Internet sea mejor?.

Antes los proyectos colectivos eran colectivos porque ambicionábamos crear nuestra propia infraestructura, y había mucho trabajo que hacer y muchas puertas

a las que llamar si se quería editar un disco o un libro. Hoy el trabajo, la infraestructura está hecha, y la puerta a la que hay que llamar es Internet, ahora no hace falta tanta gente, la comunidad punk se ha sustituido por la comunidad de Internet. Tú solo, tú individuo puedes estar ahora solo y llegar con Internet a todos los demás en detrimento de los proyectos colectivos. Esto son síntomas del crecimiento del que Ciemo estamos en contra. Estar en contra del desarrollo, es al menos desear desglobalizar, desindustrializar, desurbanizar, pero el punk nunca ha estado tan felizmente globalizado, y está cómodo en la urbe y también en la industria, la del petróleo parece su favorita.

Al igual que en el mundo laboral convencional, en el punk, la principal fuerza productiva (nunca quisimos que el punk fuera productivo) es la tecnología digital, que ha desbancado todo ese trabajo manual del que el punk se sintió una vez orgulloso.

El punk tampoco forma un mundo aparte alternativo dentro de la sociedad, con sus propios valores, tradiciones y reglas, al menos no en La Rioja. No puede constituirse una comunidad con identidad propia, su identidad es simplemente la misma que ese abanico enorme, ambiguo y desclasado de la música rock. El capitalismo y sus valores individualistas y competitivos se han instalado permanentemente en el punk y no hay muchos esfuerzos para que eso cambie.

Sí Paco, contradicciones, Ciemo tenemos casi todas, pedimos perdón al mundo. En cuanto a lo primitivo del sonido... ¿Cómo vamos a tocar sino?, ya sabes de la poca pericia que tenemos con los instrumentos. No podemos hacer sino ruido básico, tocados por los instrumentos que han formado siempre parte de la tradición punk. Pero avisamos que cada día puede que estemos más lejos de ellos.

El punk nos ha envenenado en cuanto a que sabemos de lo insalubre de este movimiento, pero no acabamos de abandonarlo. Será que no nos sienta tan mal. Hay veneno, hay adicción... no conseguimos deshabituarnos del punk, tampoco lo buscamos, hemos sido punks desde que supimos de esto, y también es un ejercicio de responsabilidad (¿de responsabilidad cristiana?), continuar en el de forma crítica. Y con cierta resignación, pero con mucho placer, continuamos haciendo ese ruido del que no hemos sabido progresar.

MRR: Esta entrevista es para el ultimo numero de MRR en formato físico. Otro proyecto que acaba. Que opinion os merece que algo que lleva tanto tiempo y que igual para nosotros era impensable que no estuviera ahi desaparezca? Yo no veo lejos el momento en que todo lo físico sea no solo obsoleto sino un estorbo lo cual es una contradicción total dado que soy un acumulador de mierda. Creéis que tiene sentido fabricar discos y cassettes, imprimir fanzines o estampar camisetas de la manera que lo hacemos?

Pienso que de la forma en la que lo hacemos, definitivamente no tiene sentido. Es complejo esto del punk, tu sabes Paco, que somos de pueblo, hubo un tiempo en el que ansiábamos, necesitábamos tener acceso a los discos que sonaban punk a los textos que hablaban de punk, y no podíamos, era muy difícil llegar a ellos. Queríamos muchos discos y cassettes, tener la posibilidad de que una banda de punk pudiera girar por todo el mundo, redes que unieran un movimiento mundial, y hay quien piensa que ahora tenemos todo eso, y que nos quejamos por el único afán de protestar. No es verdad, tenemos un sucedáneo de esos proyectos, tenemos solo fantasía superficial, ¿hemos conseguido nosotros que el punk sea accesible para todo el mundo?, ¿o lo ha conseguido el capital, porque se ha dado cuenta de que era posible monetizar la protesta, incluso la más marginal? Apuesto por esto último. No hemos hecho del punk algo popular, hemos hecho que el punk sea un producto más que se puede encontrar en cualquier supermercado de la música o la moda.

Nunca el punk editó tanta mierda, nunca esa mierda fue tan claramente mercancía. El punk se preocupa más por formar parte de la circulación mundial de mercancías.... que por hacer una crítica al hecho de que los punks de los países del sur del planeta no puedan circular tan fácilmente como sus discos.

Chesterton decía: Los hombres pueden ayunar cuarenta días para merecer el canto de un mirlo, Ciemo interpretamos que, por el contrario, un punk solo necesita una maqueta en bandcamp para recorrerse el mundo emborrachándose con otros idiotas.

Pienso que sí tiene sentido fabricar nuestros propios textos o músicas, y distribuirlos con cercanía e intentando abarcar la mayor parte del proceso. Porque necesitamos fundir el trabajo manual con el intelectual, sólo puede formarse un pensamiento integral de las cosas si intentamos poner en practica esas cosas, si tocamos esas cosas, si absorbemos y vivimos lo material. Saber el esfuerzo que supone la producción nos hace ser críticos con ella, conocer la destrucción que implica nos llevará a pararla cuando proceda. Pero ahora, ya no solo no imprimimos nuestros pensamientos, como hacían aquellos anarquistas con sus minervas clandestinas, es que no vemos ni las máquinas que imprimen los textos, ni las que prensan los discos, ni conocemos a quienes lo hacen. Las órdenes tienden a darse a golpe de clic. La relación es con el clic, no con los seres humanos. Y progresivamente menos gente tendrá una relación material con nosotros, con nuestra explotación.

Que desaparezca MRR es una pena, una muestra más de que se va desarrollando una pérdida de los saberes tradicionales, que creaban tejido, comunidad, trabajo colectivo, comunicación entre personas, un lugar físico al que acudir, un refugio con más verdad que Internet. Que todo quede en la web me parece una mierda, la web es un lugar frágil muy dependiente de la energía y la tecnología de las que el capital es dueño. Habrá que hacer también autocrítica, yo reconozco que hace tiempo que no compro MRR.

MRR: Hablando un poco de música. Cuando escucho a Ciemo muchas cosas me vienen a la cabeza. Un sonido muy crudo anclado en la tradición del hardcore nórdico con la idiosincrasia de las bandas de la época dorada Europea pero con una total falta de respeto por las normas musicales. Creéis que hay sitio para la evolución dentro del punk? Estas cansados de la aburrida uniformidad del sonido punk?

Ser punk es no ser un imbécil. ¿Sabes lo que es ser un imbécil?, que alguien grite: ¡El de la camiseta de Discharge!, y que de repente cientos de punkis de España, de USA, Perú, Singapur, Grecia, Rusia o Japón se den la vuelta y veamos exactamente la misma cara de imbécil con la misma camiseta.

A veces pienso que el que las hojas sean verdes o las montañas de mi pueblo rojas es algo que continuará en el tiempo, pero ese verde, ese rojo de las hojas de las montañas, de los lugares donde están y de las primaveras y los inviernos de cada año son siempre únicos y nuevos. La repetición en un conjunto de piedras puede ser emocionante y nuevo en cada una de ellas. Nos dicen que todo lo que se repite está muerto. ¿pero lo nuevo, viene de la vida o de la muerte?'

Nuestros movimientos, la postura de nuestro cuerpo... cambia cuando advertimos el posible fracaso, el peligro, o simplemente estamos cansados de ellos. También podemos apreciar que esa jubilada que todos los días hace los mismos kilómetros andando por la ribera del río Cidacos lo disfruta y lo siente necesario, a ver si va a ser que la repetición no es ausencia de vida sino de abundancia de vitalidad en esa jubilada. El sol sale cada mañana y no se cansa de salir, la repetición puede sucederse por millones de años y ser algo voluntario y vital, y también puede parar

por momentos. El hombre ha permanecido en la tierra por millones de años y cada nuevo nacimiento es un acontecimiento, para bien o para mal. ¡Que sea el punk algo para el bien! Que sea el punk algo genuino en sí mismo por su propia inercia vital y no por una identidad estética. Que sea cada una de nuestras acciones al mismo tiempo que un ejercicio para transformar la realidad, una muestra de humildad y modestia.

Hemos de agradecer las posibilidades que tiene el punk en el norte opulento responsabilizándonos de ellas y siendo solidarios con quienes en otra parte del planeta no tienen esas posibilidades. Seguramente, el hecho de que nosotros podamos viajar en avión una vez al mes por el mundo tiene incidencia en que en Venezuela haya un golpe por el petróleo o en México asesinatos en las fronteras. ¿No serán cada uno de nuestros bienes coleccionados despojos de otros lugares del mundo?

Sí, nos gusta mucho el hardcore nórdico de los 80, pero también el de Latinoamérica o del Estado Español, de antes y ahora.

MRR: Uno de los temas de conversación mas recurrentes que tengo con gente de mi edad que ha estado ligada al punk por bastante tiempo es la queja constante de como todo ha cambiado, ya nada es igual y todo esta muy vacío de contenido. Si bien es cierto que no les falta la razón también pienso que con quedarse anclado en el pasado no lleva a nada mas que un ejercicio de nostalgia. Sois de los que estáis decepcionados? Esperabais que el punk fuera quien os diera respuestas a todos vuestras preguntas y cuando habéis descubierto que eso no es el punk os sentís engañados? O pensáis que hay sitio aun para el idealismo indiferentemente de esa actitud autentica del "punk verdadero".

El punk puede vivirse de manera romántica, y puede despertar el mismo rechazo y rabia contra el mismo que un fracaso amoroso.

Creo que es muy frecuente idealizar el punk, y pensar que nos va a dar todas las respuestas. Al menos antes era obvio su enorme componente comunicativo, donde las bandas se preocupaban de que sus letras se leyeran y entendiesen. Hoy, me llega mucho ruido artístico, la gente compone las canciones imitando una fórmula vieja y lo que llega a nuestros oídos es una pieza de un molde ya conocido, pero así como mal terminada, elaborada muy rápido, sin atención y con el deseo de que llegue a todas partes del mundo sin tiempo que perder. Un sucedáneo que no expresa nada. No digo que el viejo punk contestara a demasiadas preguntas, pero este sucedáneo no me dice nada de nada.

Sea como sea, esperar algo del punk hoy en día... tiene sentido porque nos ha hecho muchas promesas, pero en el 2019 creérnoslas es únicamente responsabilidad nuestra. Creo que como todas las contra-culturas que he conocido, son ya parte de la cultura, la cultura para conformarse necesita la contra-cultura, tal como el sistema democrático necesita la cultura.

Pensar hoy (tal vez siempre) en un "punk verdadero" es un ejercicio de elitismo que no me parece muy saludable, suelen ser pensamientos autorreferenciales y autocomplacientes con los que hay que tener mucho cuidado, y muy comunes en todos nosotros.

Es peligroso que en busca de esa autenticidad individual veamos ya cómo enemigos a los otros punks, es absurdo que explicando todas las desgracias del mundo nos complazcamos con la necia idea de que "la gente es imbécil".

Básicamente pienso que hay mucho de lo que estar en contra, el punk me ha parecido siempre un lugar ideal para pensar, y pensar es siempre pensar en contra de alguien incluso del propio punk.

En mi pueblo, en mi vida personal con otros punks de Arnedo y del exterior sigo viendo batallas contra el conformismo y la opresión, no me cabe la menor duda de que hay lugar para esto. Por muy manso y aburrido que sean los impulsos del punk hoy, sé con firmeza que no todo está hecho ni terminado, y menos el punk, que procede de una crítica radical y de un vómito anti todo. No se puede dar por muerto a esto todavía y de ahí tantos esfuerzos por parte del sistema en rematarlo.

Es un mal vicio en el punk de los últimos años, rebotado y desconfiado, arremeter únicamente contra el propio punk, parece que una vez que nos hemos sentido traicionados por este, que nos hemos visto dañados y engañados por el, porque como inocentes idealistas hemos tenido la fe de que el punk cambiaría el mundo y a nosotros, tras darnos cuenta de que no es así arremetemos contra el sin piedad, queriéndole causar al prójimo el mismo daño que hemos sufrido nosotros. Uno de los más tristes factores de estabilidad social es precisamente ese, que el odio de los oprimidos suele dirigirse a esos que también están oprimidos.

Creo que es saludable ser hipercrítico con el punk, pero cuando, como, donde, ¿todo el tiempo?, en cualquier lugar? Es triste pelearnos por matices, es triste el desencuentro con el antisistema y no con el sistema. El punk y su funcionamiento interno puede ser un debate adictivo e inagotable. Miremos esta entrevista, que seguro que si sucede es porque Ciemo provocamos estas preguntas, pero todo gira en torno a nuestro maltratado punk, en vez de estar creando estrategias contra el sistema.

Simone Weil dijo: Excluir la fuerza de los débiles para poder soportar la de los fuertes.

MRR: Hablando de nuevo de los sitios donde vivís. Santi, cuéntanos que ocurre por Las Islas Canarias, creo que fuera de allí se sabe bastante poco o nada, es mas no se hasta que punto la gente sabe donde están las islas. Vosotros dos tocabais anteriormente en CISMA e históricamente siempre ha habido buenísimas bandas por allá, Y Teo, que pasa por Arnedo?

En Arnedo, buf, lo más interesante para mí son los lazos que mantengo con pocos pero buenos amigos, y en torno a eso estamos intentando sacar adelante nuestro núcleo sindical de CNT, un grupo de consumo, tocamos a veces con Irreparables, cuando viene Santi con Ciemo... esto no es un lugar muy excitante para el punk. Montamos a veces conciertos, pero siempre han tener un contenido antiautoritario o ser más que música. Hacemos jornadas de debate con perspectiva libertaria. Hay ahora muchas mujeres auto organizándose en un colectivo feminista llamado Luz ultravioleta, también un programa de radio feminista llamado Voz Ultravioleta y otro que intenta ser anarquista con el nombre de Hardcore Radikal.

En Tenerife hay muy poco o prácticamente nada relacionado con el punk o quizás yo lo veo así en mi forma de entender el punk.

Hace unos años con mi amigo Txemi empezamos un colectivo para montar conciertos de bandas de punk como DOOM, ACTIVE MINDS, THE ASTRONAUTS, ZOUNDS... lo podíamos autogestionar gracias a las noches veganas que hace Txemi (con su proyecto de música y cocina Carabrecol) más o menos una vez al mes en Las Palmas de Gran Canaria que es donde él vive y también a Camisetas el Destierro que es un proyecto de serigrafía con el que continuo a día de hoy. Para mí esto ha sido lo más interesante que se ha hecho aquí en estos 15 años que llevo viviendo en Tenerife.

Gracias a Paco y a MRR por su deseo que querer saber de nosotros, por todas esas décadas de esfuerzo para hacer del punk un lugar acogedor. Salud y anarquía.

Teodoro Hernandez
Calle Juan Carlos I, 14, 1ºD
26580 Arnedo
La Rioja ESPAÑA

Santiago Soriano Royo
C/Los Pollitos No. 12
Cp/38296 La Laguna
Tenerife (Islas Canarias) ESPAÑA

imprint
indie printing

March 13, 2019

Dear Maximum Rocknroll,

Thank you for letting us be a part of your zine since we opened our doors in 1994.

As young people growing up in FL, a resource like MRR was invaluable. We learned of bands and labels we'd never heard of. We read excellent interviews where we could put faces to names and names to places. We would later play in bands, hook up with other bands, and learn and grow and become the people we are now.

Today we still work with many of the people we met early on, helping folks release their music.

MRR in print form will be missed, and the scene will feel that loss, but you can bet we will keep up with the weekly radio show, and online content.

Many thanks,
Your friends at Imprint

JUST ADD VINYL

7" Folders starting @ $95 — Pockets starting @ $225

10" Jackets starting @ $550

12" Jackets starting @ $450

FULL COLOR CENTER LABELS $150 with any jacket or insert order
1,000 quantity (includes 30% overs)

WWW.ILOVEIMPRINT.COM

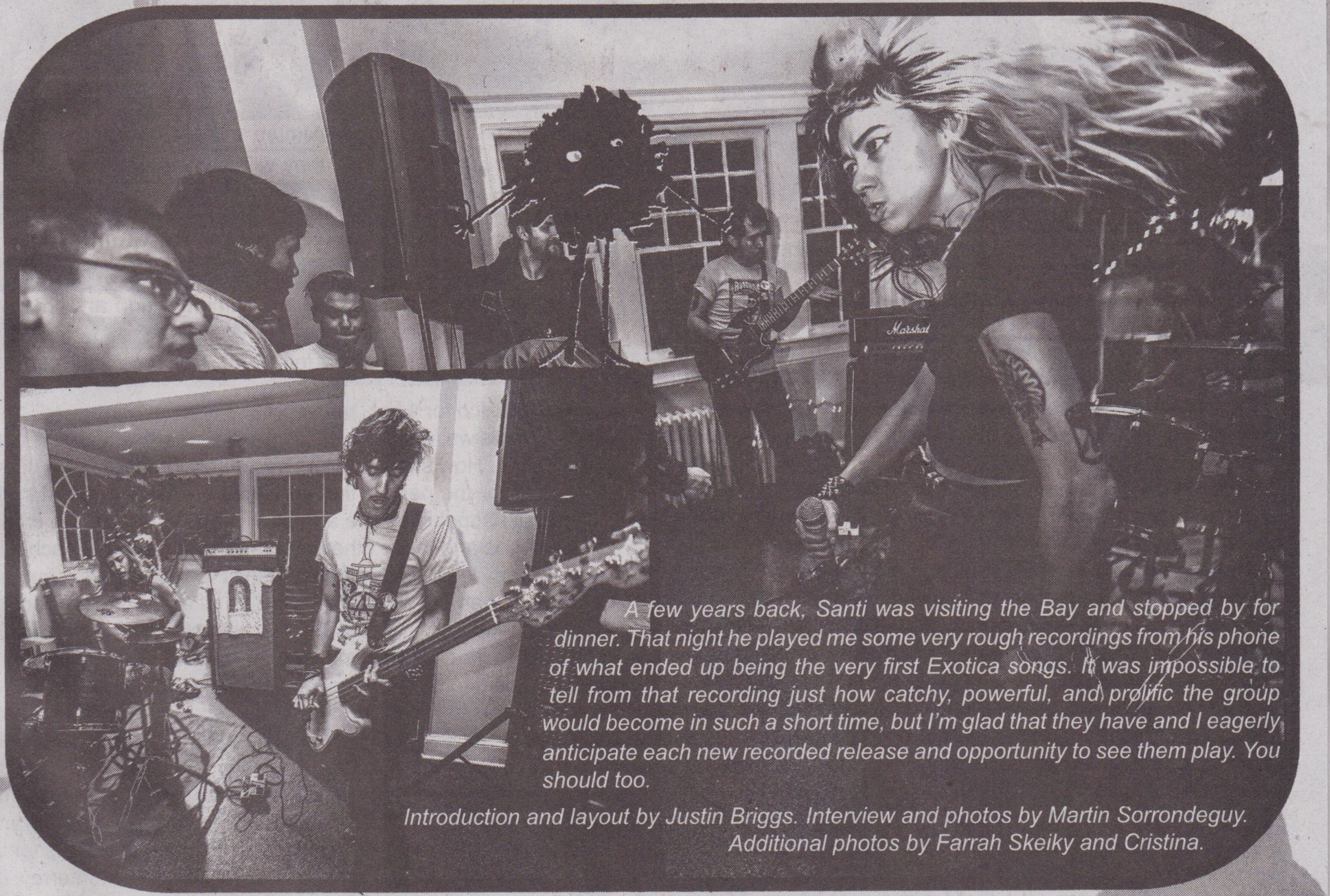
- FRIENDLY CUSTOMER SERVICE, JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY
- KNOWLEDGABLE ART DEPARTMENT WILL ENSURE YOUR ART IS READY TO GO
- DIGITAL PROOFS OFTEN DELIVERED VIA EMAIL SAME DAY
- IF YOU FIND A BETTER PRICE, WE WILL WORK TO MATCH THAT PRICE!

3449 TECHNOLOGY DRIVE, STE. 212, NORTH VENICE, FLORIDA 34275
YOU CAN CALL US, WE'LL ANSWER: 941.484.5151

MANUFACTURING QUALITY GOODS FOR YOUR BAND AND RECORD LABEL, SINCE 1994.

musique exotique
WITH

EXOTICA



A few years back, Santi was visiting the Bay and stopped by for dinner. That night he played me some very rough recordings from his phone of what ended up being the very first Exotica songs. It was impossible to tell from that recording just how catchy, powerful, and prolific the group would become in such a short time, but I'm glad that they have and I eagerly anticipate each new recorded release and opportunity to see them play. You should too.

Introduction and layout by Justin Briggs. Interview and photos by Martin Sorrondeguy. Additional photos by Farrah Skeiky and Cristina.

MRR: How long have you been a band?

Anjelica: Three years? No, maybe four years. Since 2015, because that's how long David has lived here.

David: I think it started in December of 2015 with Santi, Anjelica, and I, and then we invited Lauren. I think we started at the end of 2015, then with Lauren in the beginning of 2016.

MRR: What initiated the idea to do this band?

David: Anjelica and I had just moved to New York City in November 2015. We were playing together in Texas with another band called Ataque de Rabia at the border, in the [Rio Grande] Valley. We still had several songs that didn't work out with that band so we invited Santi and we started making new songs. We had like four or five songs together, so we needed someone to sing.

Anjelica: I suggested Lauren!

Santi: We were all against it but Anjelica. Haha.

Anjelica: I had to fight them.

Lauren: They all regret it now.

MRR: Lauren, do you write the lyrics? Talk to me a little bit about what Exotica is putting out there in the world lyrically.

Lauren: I had never really written lyrics before even though I had sung in a band, so when they invited me to play I looked forward to it but never realized how difficult writing lyrics would be. It comes easier for me to write about personal stuff. I feel like it's an outlet for me to express that living in New York can be hard sometimes, as well as things like the struggles with mental illness that we all—especially in the punk community—can be pretty susceptible to. I've been able to express that and in a broader sense some general frustrations and commentary on things I see in life that I don't like.

MRR: Are all the songs that Exotica does in Spanish? Or are they in English too? I know you're pretty fluent in Spanish, so is it just something that is more comfortable for you?

Lauren: It's about half and half. I love Spanish punk and Latin-American punk so much, but honestly it is easier for me to write in Spanish

than it is in English, which is kind of funny because I would have expected it to be the opposite. But I feel like singing in Spanish has a cadence and a rhythm that I like a lot more. It just sounds better and I can say what I want to say more directly.

MRR: You just got back from Japan! How was that?

Lauren: It was amazing! It was one of the coolest places any of us have ever been. At least for me. I had never been to Asia before. I'm kind of speechless.
Anjelica: It blew Lauren's mind!
Lauren: It blew my mind. For real, it was so unlike any place I've been before in many ways.
Santi:wwd so well in such a short period of time. I didn't really grow up punk like everyone else, so the first punk that I listened to was Japanese ADK bands that my friends showed me. It was cool for me to get to be in Japan around some of the first punk for me when I was already old.
David: For me, it was very surprising how coming from this part of the world made me think that not everything that I have been thinking about my reality has to be that way. There's another way you can live your life. You also realize that it's a very capitalistic and very individualistic kind of system just taking it to another reality. I dunno how to explain it. It's also possible to be nice, possible to press yourself, to control yourself to not be as shitty as you are regularly, and I always take that for granted with my friends and my life. It was nice to see all these new people that I'd never met before being so nice and so friendly with us. It's very corny to say, but this thing that united us was music, and it made me feel some very beautiful feelings about being alive and all that. I think that's what we all felt in our own way, how beautiful that moment was.

MRR: Culturally, what were things that stood out to you right away?

Anjelica: Nobody jaywalks there. If you cross the street when you're not supposed to and you don't have the light, even if there are no cars coming, it feels like you are engaging in some very antisocial behavior. Our friend Kohei from DC—he grew up in Japan and the US—took good care of us while we were there. He told us about when he was 18 and he did acid in DC and walked into the middle of the street and said, "Fuck the sidewalk!" The rules are very ingrained and even the punks really like to follow them.
Santi: Also, they told me there that no one is going to tell you no. You have restrict yourself. Because of the politeness, everyone will try to provide you the maximum and just say yes. Even when they don't want to say yes, they will say yes and you should be aware of that.

MRR: Where else have you gone? You toured Europe, correct?

Lauren: We toured Europe two summers ago and then we went to Mexico. Mexico was great!
Anjelica: I think for David it felt weird. Because you hadn't lived in Mexico for what, two years?
David: It was weird to go back to my own country after years of not living there. How should I be? The person that I was, the person that I am, or the person that you want me to be? Knowing that life is still happening there and all these new people are coming to the scene and these other people are not talking to each other now. When I left everybody was friends with each other, and now it is really hard to make friends with different people because you don't know if they are friends now or not. It was just very stressful to me. At the same time, at the end of the night there's alcohol, parties, and punk, and everybody is friends again, but the next day is like a fucking telenovela and everybody hates each other to death because of stupid things. I'm not saying that I'm getting very Americanized or anything, but it's something that I have learned from New York. Here everything happens so fast from one month to another that there's new gossip, a new drama, a new something, so nobody cares. In Mexico the thing is for life, and for me was a little bit stressful. We played Monterrey and we played the Valley in Texas, which is like my second home. It was cool to play those places and see them with the perspective of someone that doesn't live there anymore. I always feel in the middle of my Mexican friends and my American friends. It was a little bit stressful but I think it went pretty well. When you go to Mexico, you don't expect it to be like in Europe or in the States thinking like "we are going to get money," so that was a little bit stressful and made us fight a little bit. The whole experience was sentimental but it was nice. I think that experience made us a little closer to each other.

MRR: Talk to me about that little logo that you drew. What is the idea with that little *bichito*, that little monster?

Lauren: He's a very existential man.
Santi: It's a little friend of ours. He's a little bit of each of us. Just a little friend. We call him Tipito.

MRR: A lot has happened for Exotica. Do you guys feel really lucky compared to other New York bands? Are you surprised by it? What's your take on it?

EXOTICA

Lauren: I do feel really lucky with the response that we have gotten. I don't think any of us were expecting it. If you told me three and a half years ago that we would be going to Japan, Europe, and Mexico, I would be like, you're crazy. I definitely feel really fortunate.

Anjelica: Very surprised and definitely lucky that we've been so well received by people internationally.

David: La Vida Es Un Mus power. Paco power! I also think that the songs are catchy. We are not reinventing the wheel, people can just enjoy it and dance and it has all the Paco support, so I think it's the perfect combination.

MRR: Talk to me about New York these days. What's going on there that you're really into?

Anjelica: Not me. I work nights so I'm kind of outside of punk right now. In terms of new bands in New York, I like Flower a lot. They're my roommates and they're like anarcho-crusty. I think they're cool, but I really don't get to make it out to a lot of shows.

Lauren: I've been playing in this band, Taz. We've been jamming for about a year. We just did a small tour. Terrorist is good.

David: Pobreza Mental!

MRR: What is it about New York that keeps you all there?

Santi: I was going to say Frenzy, but they're not from New York. I went to see Frenzy with Zyanose last night and they were great. I think they're the best band.

Lauren: I'm not going to speak for everybody but I feel like after Japan we've been laying kind of low. I haven't been going out as much as I used to. It's hard because New York is a really difficult place to live. The community here is good and we do have a lot of support. The last year especially was pretty difficult for a lot of people, but finding the community that you have in really tough, traumatic times strengthens that bond that you have here. It's also good to see people step up and reach out to do the things that they can do. Especially in a place like New York that has so many more resources than other cities or smaller towns, just because there's so much here at everyone's disposal, you just have to figure out how to find it and how to use it.

MRR: What do you all see happening for Exotica now? What do you want to do with the band?

Santi: I don't know.

Lauren: I don't know. We've been kind of taking a small break and just chilling a little bit after Japan because we were gone for so long and playing so much and also had just recorded our new 7".

Santi: We would like to go to places we haven't been yet, but we have to rest a little bit. Last year we were in Japan for like a month, we were playing and touring a bunch, and we recorded a lot of stuff. In New York it is kind of hard to find a schedule to do all these things.

Anjelica: David works 9 to 6 and has limited vacation time, so I think we are playing a few local shows and we wanna tour one or two times this year. Nothing too crazy.

Santi: Maybe another mixtape with bands that we like. Oh! Malimpliki is coming and we are touring with them in October. Lauren: We toured with them in Japan.

David: And they sing in Esperanto.

MRR: Oh nice! Is there anything you wanted to talk about in this interview? It's your first interview ever in *Maximum Rocknroll* and the magazine is coming to an end, so is there anything that you wanted to talk about?

David: I think here in New York people don't really have a strong opinion of the magazine, but from my perspective, I think the magazine really opened up the horizons for a lot of bands in Mexico and put us in contact with a lot of international bands that we didn't have any other way of knowing. It's sad that it's coming to an end.

Santi: I used to steal it from Tower Records in Buenos Aires when I was a kid skating there, and it got me into a lot of terrible bands

and a lot of good bands. In Argentina, you grab this magazine and you just want to hear every band that is in there. Some were good, and some were not. You get into a lot of bad things with *MRR*. But I was telling someone the other day how I am a big fan of the third Concrete Sox LP because I wanted to hear them after they were in *MRR*. It was the only one I could find and it's not the good one, but I really like it.

MRR: What do you think sets you apart from a lot of the other bands that are around right now?
Lauren: I actually was thinking about this the other day.
Santi: I was just thinking that it is funny that we are all from different parts of the world—David is from Mexico, I am from Argentina, Lauren is from Maryland, and Anjelica is from New Hampshire. It's cool also that we all speak Spanish and the four of us can communicate in Spanish or English.
Lauren: Both Anjelica and I lived abroad, and I met Santi in Argentina and Anjelica met David in Mexico.

MRR: I think as individuals that is a really unique story, but how about as a band? Sonically, what sets you apart?
Anjelica: I think sometimes the fact that I don't really know how to play the drums and am just making up what I can gives the drums a specific sound. Santi and I don't know how to play our instruments and that combined with David—who's really good at guitar and has been playing for more than half his life—and Lauren singing in two languages...each person has their own contribution.
Lauren: The songwriting process is very collaborative and very manic, and I think that comes across. A lot of it is like throwing a bunch of notes in a blender and spitting out I-don't-know-what.
Santi: We have very different taste. I am always complaining that nobody likes the same punk that I like.
Lauren: Which is not true!
David: We have very different influences but we also record ourselves, so it doesn't end up with the same sound that everybody has, with the same people doing it all over and over again and it all comes out sounding like the same contemporary band. It sounds different, it sounds shitty, but it's also a part of this thing.
Santi: We are always experimenting instead of being like, this is what we wanna…I think it just helps that there's a randomness.
Lauren: I can definitely say that there's a randomness.
Anjelica: There's a lot of randomness.
Santi: It's like…what is the word…like things kind of happen…

MRR: The results, *los resultados*.
Santi: Yes, exactly! It is not, "This is exactly how it should be…"
Lauren: It's not very planned.
Santi: It kind of happens organically.

MRR: Spontaneously.
Santi: I like that. Instead of trying to sound like this band, or like this song, instead it's like, no, this is just what's coming.
Lauren: Organic randomness.

MRR: I like it. How can people reach you?
Santi: Bandcamp or message Paco so he can stay mad at me. Haha. He's like, "Oh my god, those fucking bastards!"

exoticapunk.bandcamp.com

the Ejector Seats

BLUEPRINT FOR A MISERABLE EXISTENCE

LP OUT NOW

collision course records.com

collision course records.com

collision course records.com

EXTREME MUTILATION

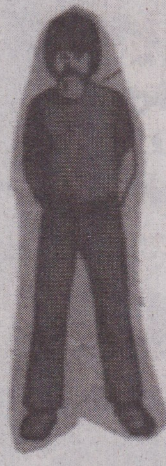
THE EXSENADORS - Kamatayan o Kalayaan 7"
On their 3rd proper release they offer a driving and intense yet melodic sound demonstrating their roots in hardcore, street punk, and Oi. Both anthemic and politically agitating this is without a doubt the best leftist Oi in all of Asia.

VEILS - ST 7"
Dark hardcore from Manila. Bang your head and embrace the void. Featuring ex and current members of Bystorm, FEUD, Chokecoooi and Prayer of Endurance. This is a co-released with Love From Hate Records, Mutilated Noise, Still Ill Records,

FEUD - For The Sake of Unity 7"
Remastered classic 'For the Sake of Unity' which was originally released back in 2000 on a 3" MCD format. Remastered to give it a more modern feel, this classic collection of songs do not disappoint. Fast, positive, political straightedge hardcore, the way it was meant to be! (100 on red, 100 on blue, 300 on black) of the best bands to come out of the southern area of Manila. Black vinyl out of 300. Co-released with Still Ill Records

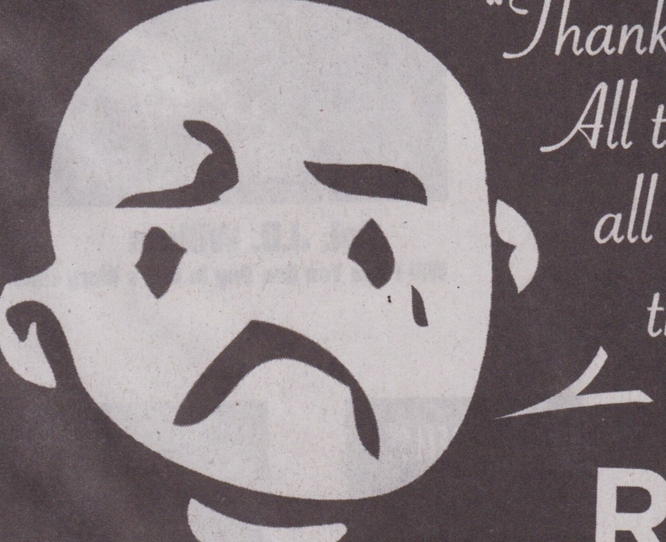
All 7"s $5 each. contact us for shipping rates. Add us: www.fb.com/MutilatedNoise/

unionbossrecords.com



ugly music for your ugly head

MR. N. CHOP SEZ:



"Thanks for everything MRR! All the music, all the articles, all the reviews, but most of all, thank you for staining my hands pitch black with ink."

R.I.P. MRR!

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT NECK CHOP RECORDS

WWW.BADSKULLS.COM

Dirt Cult Records
INTRODUCING
THE FLESHIES
Holy shit! The first Fleshies LP in 10 years!
Out of May 2nd!
dirtcultrecords.com
IN CONDEMNATION
NEIGH BOR HOOD BRATS
CLAW MARKS
SKAM OCH SKULD
ALLVARET

The INVISIBLE TEARDROPS
in Endless Winter
ARKAM RECORDS
the Colonel J.D. WILKES
The Invisible Teardrops
Endless Winter
Col. J.D. Wilkes
Will I See You One Day in God's Glory Land
THE PINE HILL HAINTS
MAXX
THE GARTRELLS
The Pine Hill Haints
Hartle Road
The Gartrells
Slow Motion Cowboys

KIM GARCIA IS A CALIFORNIA-RAISED, New York City-based filmmaker currently finishing a new queer punk sci-fi film called Dissonance. Kim has been involved in film and video art in different capacities for many years, and has more recently gotten behind the camera as a director. We sat down with Kim to ask her about her current film projects, the inspiration she draws from DIY and punk subcultures, and what it means to try to make films without the hierarchies that dominate the film world today.

Kim Garcia

DISSONANCE

Interview and introduction by Yumi Lee and Golnar Nikpour. Images taken from Dissonance, *directed by Kim Garcia, cinematography by Kristen Meloche.*

MRR: Let's start by talking about the narrative film you're currently working on. What is the film, what are the ideas behind it, and when will people be able to watch it?

Kim Garcia: The film I'm currently working on is called *Dissonance.* It's about queer punks in the 1990s, but with a surreal spin because the characters discover a room in which dreams are recorded onto VHS tapes. It's using sci-fi to explore queer intimacy and what it is that people are looking for in terms of connection with one another. In the film, you see some of the characters searching for deeper sense of connection, because even in subcultural settings connection and intimacy can be difficult to achieve. We'll see if it's successful, but I think the fun of making a queer film and a sci-fi film is that we can explore these different themes without abiding by heteronormative or cinematic conventions. I am looking to get the film into festivals now, and hopefully it will be available for people to watch next summer or fall.

MRR: Where does punk come in for you in your life and in the film?

Growing up as a punk kid of the '90s, punk entered my life as a space to explore, to push back against social norms, and to try new things. It was a space to say, "This is who I actually want to be and how I want to live my life." Of course, you'll find social conformity in punk too. But I've always gravitated towards the kinds of people who look to break down norms, explore different kinds of self-expression, and open up ways to connect with each other. I was drawn to punk because I saw punks as having a different way of living life. Although there is a bit of contemporary self-reflection in the film about that '90s moment, because I feel like we didn't always have the language in those days to talk about where we wanted to be.

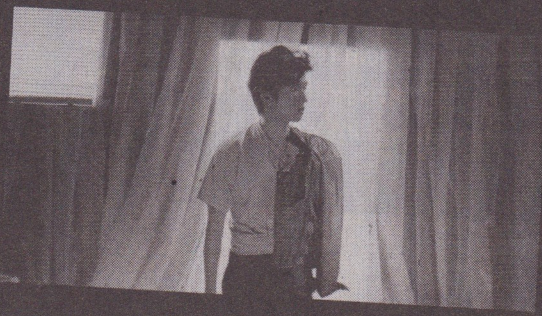
MRR: What did punk look like for you? What was your punk world growing up?

I grew up in Salinas, California, so I was close to the Bay Area and Santa Cruz punk scenes, and I would also go down to L.A. fairly often. Riot grrrl was big when I was growing up. Salinas also had a big Mexican American punk scene. I pulled different things from each one of these

"I've always gravitated towards the kinds of people who look to break down norms, explore different kinds of self-expression, and open up ways to connect with each other."

scenes because I never felt fully situated in any one of them. I went to lots of shows at old warehouses in Salinas and Monterey where canned packing and weird shit happened. People realized they could just take over these spaces and make shows happen there. Oh! And then I found queercore/homocore in San Francisco. Outpunk was around, and bands like Chainsaw and Candyass were playing in the Bay Area. It was cool to finally find a queer space, but it was still hard to find queer PoC community in those spaces.

as the latest or hottest gear. I'm not so interested in using the top gear that everyone always says I should be using. I'm trying to achieve the energy and aesthetic of punk, as well as of '80s and '90s street art. We're trying to show a living, breathing world that isn't just washed over by corporate aesthetics. We chose a camera and we decked it out, and for the dream scenes we're using miniDV [*Ed: Digital Video*], which isn't high def but has a great look to it. A lot of people I talk to will be like, "what even is miniDV?" It looks closer to video art that I grew up with and love. It gives a different



"What if the kind of space I'd craved growing up did exist?"

MRR: So it comes full circle, because *Dissonance* is partially set in an abandoned warehouse...
Yeah that's totally taken from experience! Some people have been like, "they break into a warehouse? How is that possible?!" And I'm like, "what, you've never done that? It's a pretty normal occurrence. Have none of you tried this before?" [*laughter*]

MRR: It sounds like queer and punk go together for you?
Yes absolutely, and also my experience as a person of color. Growing up as a queer punk of color, I didn't fit easily anywhere. There were queer or punk spaces where I didn't feel like I fully fit in, where I wasn't really seen. And there were some PoC spaces that were more heteronormative where I also didn't feel fully recognized or valued. In the film the idea is: what if the kind of space I'd craved growing up *did* exist? Of course, I had little microcosms where that ideal existed, and I've held on tightly to those spaces and people—the film is also a celebration of that.

MRR: You've already mentioned that you feel like working in science fiction opens up possibilities that realist film doesn't. Could you tell us what working in that genre does for the type of stories you're trying to tell?
With this film, it allows me to be more cinematically experimental. It changes how people receive the film and open their minds up to it. People really like formula within cinema—really, people like formula in anything—but I'm always looking to disrupt formulaic expectations and norms. I have always been drawn to sci-fi because it can create a space where people are more open to different kinds of storytelling possibilities, or different types of political or social critique. People don't realize how powerful science fiction can be.

MRR: Can you talk a little bit about the look and feel of the film? How are you achieving your desired aesthetic? Feel free to nerd out!
In the cinema world, the camera that we chose to use isn't seen

texture and look to the dream scenes. I even asked filmmaker/artist friends Che "Chi Chi" Castillo, Adee Roberson, and Lacey Johnson, to create dreams videos to use in the film. I love the chance to collaborate with friends, and I'm also not interested in conforming to the aesthetic rules of cinema and making everything look pretty or uniform all the time. I want to bring energy into the film. I want people to have that emotional impact. I want people to have a full sensory experience. I don't want it to be totally clean; it's supposed to be kind of fucked up looking, kind of gritty. I want it to have a little bit of chaos to it.

MRR: It's clear that you're invested in disrupting aesthetic trends that are prevalent in film right now, but how do you go about creating a set that isn't dominated by the normal hierarchies of the film industry? In other words, how do you go about trying to create a good working environment for your collaborators? We all know that mainstream film is really messed up; we hear a new sketchy story every day. As a filmmaker who inevitably has to make a lot of the decisions but is nonetheless trying to break down those typical fucked up dynamics and hierarchies, how do you go about doing your work?
I'm constantly told that the film business is a hierarchy, and of course to some extent it is because without a director making key decisions, every step would take a lot longer. I strive to be really intentional about who I want on set, and I work to bring in people with whom I really want to collaborate. I've worked with people who are a little bit impatient with my process, because I try to bring people on set not just because of their already existing skillsets but because I want to share the process of making a film with different kinds of people. I try to prioritize bringing on women-identified people of color into the project. Right now, I'm in film school, which means that it's a great time to learn from people on set but also to provide that space for mentorship as well. The idea is to create a space where everyone can learn from each other. It's about sharing skills. Making a film is expensive. I have complicated feelings about asking for monetary

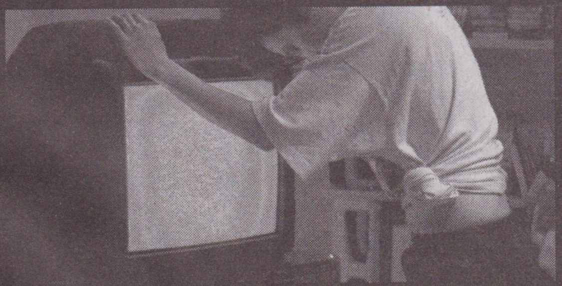
support. But when I think about it, this project has gotten people on a film set and helped them learn new skills and get material they can use for their own work.

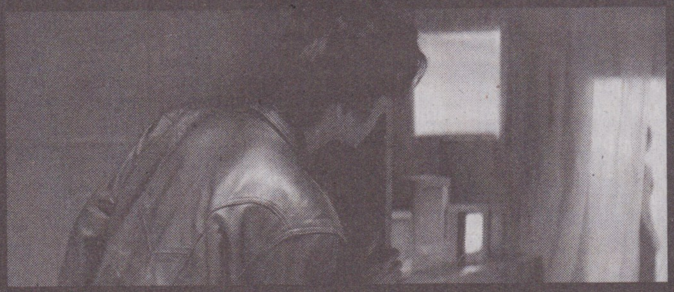
In general, it's about treating everyone's labor and time as a valued part of the project. I don't like that crap when people treat PAs or certain people on a film set as less than. These are people who are all providing key work for the project! It's about recognizing how much all of that labor is valuable. I work as hard as I can to not exploit people's time. Film exploits hours. You often hear about people working 16, 17 hour days, and it's the norm for people to work 12, 13 hour days. I try to keep days to 10-12 hours. We also try to provide food for people as well as transportation if they're having trouble getting to set, which is difficult at this level. A lot of these are things I learned at Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, where we tried to create a supportive system and help people gain access to things that have been historically closed off to them. I try to bring that approach to filmmaking.

MRR: You just mentioned being in film school. How does your radical and DIY sensibility work with being in a film school setting?
It's a fucking pain in the ass [*laughter*]. I have some great professors who support me and who I get along with, but there are other professors I get into fights with all the time. Both academia and the film industry are very white, very male-dominated. There are people in academia in film who will see some poverty porn and be like, "this is the greatest thing ever" [*laughter*]. And I'm sitting there thinking, "aren't we going to talk about how exploitative this is?!" So much of that work is for the white lens. Of course, the school I go to is a public school, and it's more affordable, so the student body is full of people I enjoy working with and who have a critique of social and cinematic norms.

MRR: You're also working on a documentary film right now on the fest The Universe Is Lit/The Multivrs Is Illuminated in the Bay Area. Can you tell us a little bit about that documentary, and about why you wanted to document that fest?
I reached out to the people organizing the fest—currently Shawna Shawnté Scroggins and Jade Ariana Fair—and asked if I could film it because I felt it should be documented and archived. What I saw in the fest was a space for people of color, particularly Black and queer communities, to come together and grapple with what it means to be punk, or even more so what it means to be an artist. I'd been having these conversations about all of the changes taking place in the Bay Area, about how people are being displaced, and about the people and communities we'd cared about starting to disappear. For me, I wanted to be sure I was sharing some skill and documenting these spaces and events in whatever way the fest organizers wanted. We're still in the process of figuring out what the final document will look like. Ultimately, this is their story.

MRR: I know that long before you got on the director's seat, you'd worked in film in various capacities. Can you tell us a bit about your trajectory? Was the end goal always to be a director?
I've always tried to translate the weird shit that's in my head. When I was younger I did video art, but film didn't feel as accessible to me at the time, because a lot of people in that world were more teched-out bros. I got into film as a projectionist, showing other people's work and working in a support role. I got into projection because there were women in the union, and a good friend of mine got me in there. But at a certain point I kept feeling like I was waiting around to see the kind of films I wanted to see but I wasn't finding them. Eventually I made the decision to start creating the films I wanted to see, which was frightening. But I finally felt that I just had to do it.





"I'm not interested in conforming to the aesthetic rules of cinema and making everything look pretty or uniform all the time."

MRR: Any advice for people out there reading this interview and wanting to get into filmmaking?
I would say just get whatever shitty camera and do it! People think they need some certain camera, or the nicest gear when honestly, it's just figuring out the story you want to tell and doing it. That's what I wish someone had told me when I was younger: just do it. Don't be hesitant, don't doubt yourself because you don't have access to the latest hot fucking thing. If you do it you'll learn, even when you make mistakes. I've made tons of mistakes and each one has been really important for me to learn from and to better understand what it means to do film. Also, it's just fun to get a bunch of your friends together and have them make a movie with you!

Follow along at instagram.com/dissonance_film.

DREAM NAILS

Interview and introduction by Francesca Tirpak

Being in a band is hard work. Being in a DIY punk band is very hard work. Being in a feminist DIY punk band in the midst of what can only be described as a political crisis is the hardest work, and London's Dream Nails are doing the best kind of it. Dealing with threats from bigots and Brexit alike is a full-time job, but they write empowering and danceable punk tunes on top of that, as well as (this will be familiar to us other creatives) work jobs on the side. The London punk scene should expect a force to be reckoned with, and it's the hardest-working band there: Janey, Mimi, Anya, and Lucy. Over the years, they've been a staple of the UK DIY feminist punk scene, prioritizing inclusivity, community, and representation.

MRR: What projects are you currently working on now? Update me!
Anya: We're working on our debut album! Janey's about to come over to my house to work on new songs. Over the past few months we've been writing furiously, concocting a new batch of potent hexes to unleash onto the patriarchy.
Janey: We're turning down two or three shows every week right now because we're ruthlessly prioritizing writing new music. We're also planning more zine workshops. All of our releases come with a zine, and we've been doing skillshares with people to show them how to make their own. We're planning one for a festival this summer!

MRR: How do you feel you're evolving as a band?
Anya: As a DIY band, we have been skilling up over the past few years, and we're always learning new things musically. A few of us are self-taught musicians and while we'll always be true to our DIY roots, we're really enjoying becoming more proficient performers. We can play our songs at breakneck speeds with full choreography now. It's amazing to look back and see how far we've come.
Mimi: I find the process of writing the instrumental parts of the song so fulfilling, because we all have our own inputs, and our songs turn into something actually very complex. Over the past year and a half we've been touring and rehearsing a lot, so when it comes to playing the shows we are having a lot of fun and the crowd feeds off of that.
Janey: Being in a feminist band is a huge commitment both on and offstage. In the last four years, we've put in a lot of thought and work into how we run as a band. For me, feminism is about the priorities you choose, and one of the biggest decisions we've made is prioritizing health and wellbeing as a band in the same way we prioritize audience wellbeing and safety. There's no point only being an external-facing feminist band; the ways we relate to each other, come together across differences and check in with each other are activist principles we put into place. It's just as important as the work we do playing fundraisers for women's refuges and establishing safe spaces at shows!

MRR: In your opinion, what is the importance of supporting DIY shows?
Anya: It's life or death, in terms of your favorite bands surviving, let alone thriving. Sometimes we can only rely on the DIY promoters and venues to make sure that we are fed, watered, and paid properly. The sense of community in community-run, often anarchist venues that we've played in around Europe has been so beautiful and nourishing for our band. We are so grateful for places like L'Usine in Geneva, Switzerland, and Sub in Gratz, Austria, for their hospitality (and two-course dinner with wine) when we're on tour. The band that's fed well, shreds well.
Mimi: To me DIY is the real shit. It's people making art and putting so much of themselves into it and into funding it. Sorry but their voices are literally the only ones that matter. Art shouldn't be about who has enough money to make it.
Janey: DIY communities are usually formed by activists and people who want to live their values, and are practically making the world better through the spaces they create and supporting each other to make music that matters. You can almost guarantee that if you're going to a DIY show, a higher proportion of your ticket price is going to the artist, because DIY promoters aren't motivated by

profit. I also think that DIY musicians have the most important lyrical content; I've seen so many brave, energetic and challenging performances from DIY musicians. Their music and the spaces that their music creates are a form of political resistance.

MRR: Any favourite DIY places you've come across in your travels?
Anya: Anywhere there's ACAB written on the walls, there are stickers covering the bathroom mirror, and the toilet paper is on a chain, we can hang our hat and call home.
Mimi: I would actually say L'Usine in Geneva was my favorite venue. The community there was really welcoming, they all tolerated my Québécois French, and there seemed to be real allyship there with the men and women. They also fed us amazing food.
Janey: This is tough, we've seen so many! I really like the venues we've played in Austria, because there's this tradition of providing a meal at the beginning of the evening. The truest definition of community is getting people together around a hot meal, and that's really special! We also stopped by a great record shop in Manchester once on tour and the owner made us tea. I bought a dub remix of Ghostbusters.

MRR: How do you feel people can best support more creativity in the DIY scene, not just musicians?
Anya: Bandcamp is such a wonderful way to support musicians. We get a lot more revenue than through other streaming platforms, and all the money goes directly to artists. We're also always looking for another use to write "Hex the Patriarchy" on an item of clothing or accessory so buying merch is good too.
Mimi: This is such a good question. Follow them on all platforms, give 'em likes, buy their merch, go to their shows!
Janey: We get so many messages from fans who are rape survivors, young queers who are just coming out to their parents, and generally women and nonbinary people who tell us that our music makes them feel seen, valid, and happy. Those messages are honestly our lifeblood, and keep us doing what we're doing!

MRR: Do you find yourself being treated differently in both DIY and mainstream situations depending on your location? Europe vs. UK vs. North America?
Mimi: Well, I've never been a touring musician in my home country of Canada. What I can say is that it's very sparse, so there is a lot more driving and a lot fewer cities to play shows. You could probably only tackle cities in one province at a time. Europe is definitely the best place to tour because of the distance you can travel for the cheapest price, and they really support musicians there.
Janey: I really worry about how Brexit will impact the UK punk scene. I think a lot of musicians rely on it. Mainland Europe has a much stronger punk venue infrastructure than the UK, with autonomous venues run by collectives that throw great shows and pay and host artists. It also has stronger arts funding, so making music is more sustainable. As live musicians, we really cut our teeth on the German gig circuit. We've made friends across Europe, and financially and emotionally sustain ourselves from these kind of communities. It's really worrying to think that when the UK leaves the EU, we'll have less access to that.

MRR: How do you feel where you're based currently, both geographically and in the scene, affects your music? Do you think about moving away from London to seek different treatment and inspiration?
Anya: London is a struggle bus, we're all on it, and we can't get off. But so much of our inspiration comes from this city, whether that's lyrics about the DIY scene here, the police's neglect of survivors of domestic violence, or inane office-speak in our day jobs (kind regards). We all have big dreams of moving away though…
Mimi: I think about moving away from London all of the time for a better quality of life. And so do all of my friends, and some of them do move away. But when I go away, something always brings me back. I think it's a love-hate relationship. It speaks to our drive as a band tc keep going even if it's tough. We all really

want to be in this band and succeed despite the overbearing weight of the city.
Janey: London forces you to fight to survive and be the best you can be. It's so fast-paced and hectic and you have to work hard to keep your head above water. The band is a release from all of that. We wouldn't have such raging punk songs if we weren't living in a draining city during a politically fucked up time. But it's the thriving activist communities and amazing people that cities draw in who inspire us to stay.

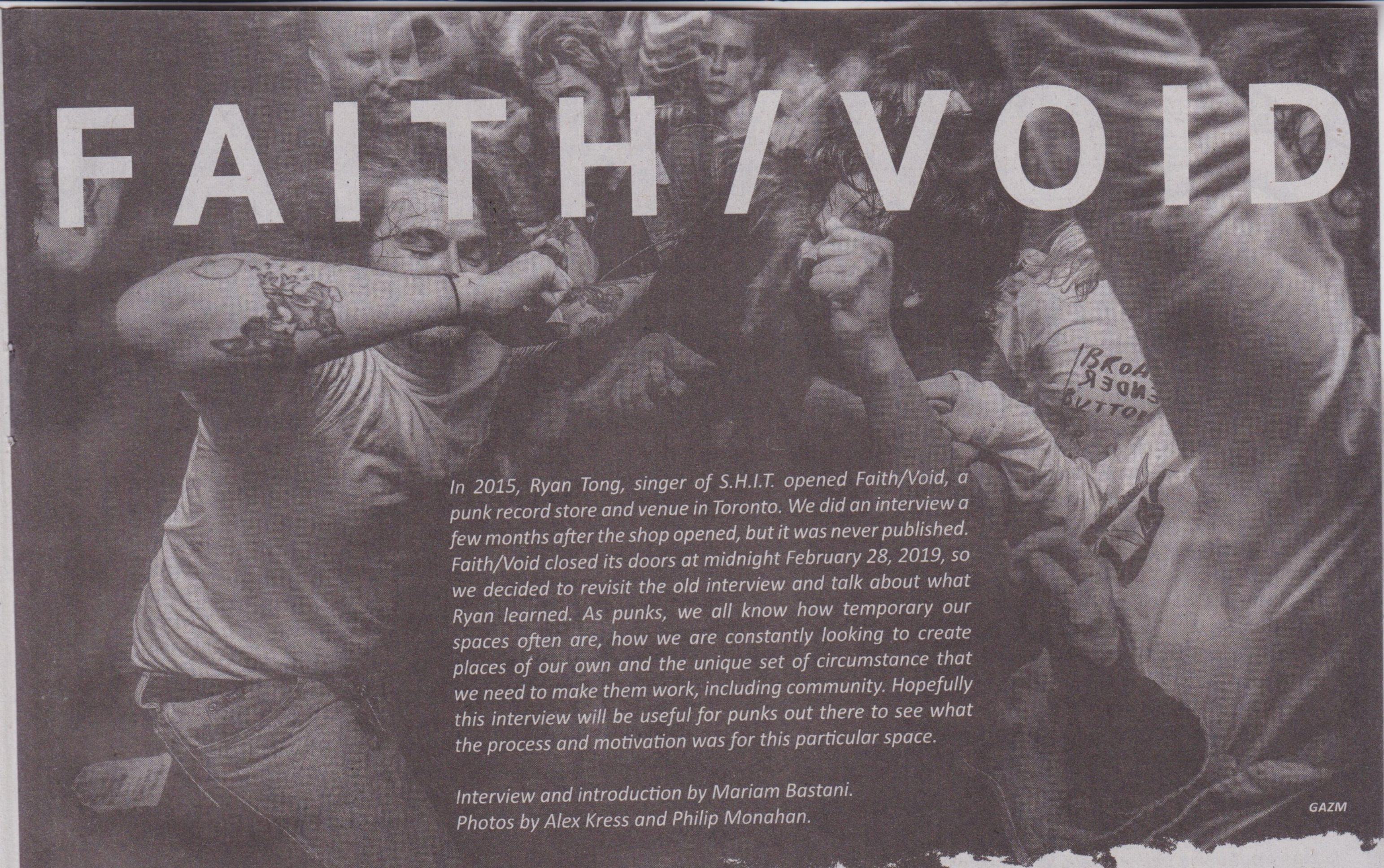
MRR: With all these festival lineups being announced, what can we do to increase awareness of female and nonbinary representation?
Anya: I wrote about this issue in 2014 in The Guardian. I was the first person to do the trick where you delete all the acts on festival posters that are all-male. Reading and Leeds had like 20% of their acts left – it was so depressingly sparse! I do think that vocal protests by music fans have a lot to do with festivals actively working to increase this now. There is a pledge that smaller festivals in the UK are signing up to to improve gender representation, but there's still a long way to go. So keep shouting, we really appreciate it!
Mimi: @ all the festivals on social media
Janey: Don't just wait until festival season: buy tickets to see female and nonbinary musicians throughout the year. Buy their music. Dance at their shows. Increase the visibility of their fan bases and platforms and demonstrate to the industry bigwigs that this is the music people want to see, and will pay to see. If the young punks can outweigh the Radiohead dads, we'll see more exciting lineups!

MRR: How do you feel you can marry good lyric writing and songwriting, and make people pay attention to both? What's the benefit to this?
Anya: We're not really the type of band to jam out and then add lyrics later. We're a pretty "lyrics first" kind of band. Our message drives us. We combine anger and joy in a lot of our music. We tend to mix harshness and shouting with harmony and hooks; darkness with syrupy sweetness. The trick with punk is to know what's just enough repetition to connect with people, but leave them wanting more. As Nadia Javed from one of our favourite UK bands the Tuts says, "Do the middle eight and then get the fuck out!"
Mimi: Songs are funny, you can love a song and not even know the words! If we think it's banging and we are shook from it, we know the people listening will as well.
Janey: We're respectful of people's time in the way we write our songs. We cut straight to it, lyrically and musically. No navel-gazing indulgence; a punch in the face and you've just about recovered for the next song. It's rare and contagious and revitalizing. There are so many clever parts of lyrics I've written that have been totally lost on shitty PA systems in underground clubs, and fans have told us they didn't properly hear the lyrics to songs until they heard recordings, but it's our energy and joyful rage they're most bought into.

`dreamnails.bandcamp.com`

ALL NEW PREMIUM VINYL RELEASES!
SLOPE
RECORDS
BESMIRCHERS
HATE YOUR LIFE
THE BLANKZ
DROPOUT RUNAWAY
THEE FADED PYCTURES
Coming On Hard
JPL
THE DICKIES
I DIG GO-GO GIRLS
the FREEZE
CALLING ALL CREATURES
Dead 77
COCKY BITCHES
THE LINECUTTERS
SLOPERECORDS.COM

FAITH/VOID



In 2015, Ryan Tong, singer of S.H.I.T. opened Faith/Void, a punk record store and venue in Toronto. We did an interview a few months after the shop opened, but it was never published. Faith/Void closed its doors at midnight February 28, 2019, so we decided to revisit the old interview and talk about what Ryan learned. As punks, we all know how temporary our spaces often are, how we are constantly looking to create places of our own and the unique set of circumstance that we need to make them work, including community. Hopefully this interview will be useful for punks out there to see what the process and motivation was for this particular space.

Interview and introduction by Mariam Bastani.
Photos by Alex Kress and Philip Monahan.

GAZM

MRR: What prompted you to open this space?

2015: At the end of 2014 I had lost my job and ended a long-term relationship and there were a lot of changes in my life and confusion with respect to the future. I had managed to save a bunch of money from my office job. I was really engaged with SHIBGB's and it was going well—we were holding community meetings and trying to expand upon what was already there. Greg and I talked about how running the space on his own was really hard. He was doing most of the hardcore and punk shows in Toronto, he was in our band, he was running the fest every year, and he had a full-time job, so running the venue on top of that was a lot. I said, "Well, I just lost my job and I have money saved up, so why don't I take up SHIBGB's as my own operation?" We talked about throwing a record shop in there so maybe it could sustain itself a little better beyond illegal booze sales and gigs.

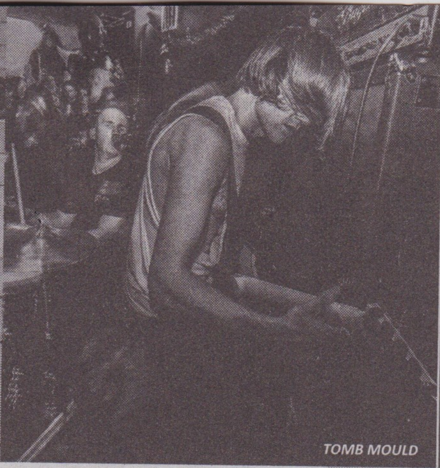
In February 2015, we got a by-law violation from the city. My immediate response was to get discouraged, but I thought maybe we should be looking for a new space and make this whole shop idea at the forefront of what happens next. I was hoping if we could have something more legitimate in the eyes of the city, we could last longer and we could have the best parts of SHIBGB's in a space that was more central. I really liked how people could come together through SHIBGB's and exchange ideas, meet other people to help them express themselves, and start bands and projects. That was a really important part of our space and I wanted to keep that going, especially since the future of what we had established was being challenged.

I got busy finding a new space and seeing if I could find a storefront that could have shows in the back. The challenge was to find a spot that was more central and affordable. It was months of searching for a space and getting rejected from most landlords worried about noise. I found this place by chance at the right moment and the rent is super cheap.

2019: Looking back, what motivated me the most and ultimately compelled me to open Faith/Void was everything that was happening to me in that moment in my life. I was experiencing a personal transition period where significant elements of my life were no longer there and what remained became more important to me than ever. It was a moment when I found myself with a rare opportunity where I had the time, energy and resources to invest in what I wanted, and at the same time SHIBGB's (a project I considered to be critical to the development of our growing underground scene) was reaching what I thought to be its untimely closing. Everything was in place to create the situation I found myself in and I was in a stage in my life where I felt the urgency to take it on.

SPECIAL INTEREST

CLOACA


TOMB MOULD

OUTCRY

MRR: Previous punk spaces have been in dead zones in the city. Even SHIBGB's got a by-law violation and many spots have since been shut down. Do you think Faith/Void has a better chance because it's in the middle of the city and in plain sight?
2015: I am hoping that is the case. This space is in a basement and hidden—you have to look for it. It's still central for people to access it. There is a lot going on street level which helps me. There is a vape lounge next door open until midnight. The way the space is set up is very promising because it's just hidden enough that it doesn't stick out, even on a busy strip, and that allows things to happen here a little less directly in the public eye.

2019: I am shocked at how long I was able to operate within the grey area of the city's by-laws, located downtown in the middle of a mixed residential and business area with a police station less than a block away. I credit this to having a legitimate retail business front the operation, the storefront being below street level, having an old landlord who didn't ask too many questions, and the sheer dumb luck of all things combined. I also did my absolute best to maintain good relationships with everyone in the building. Surprisingly, the noise complaints were minimal until the wrong people moved in next door.

MRR: There are still a few long-running punk record stores around here and in the world, but we have seen many come and go because of lack of support. Do you worry that because this space doesn't have that sort of urgency and excitement of a temporary space that punks will become complacent or take the space for granted?
2015: Of course I fucking worry! I have no fucking experience running a record shop, I've never worked in a record shop. I've been in a bunch of them, I've bought stuff from a bunch of them, and I have seen a ton of them across North America, but I've never run one. This is not my experience. It's hard not to think about that when it's a donut day or nobody comes through all day. It's hard not to get hurt by that especially since I'm used to seeing all these people at shows. I'm used to experiencing an outpouring of support in respect to Greg's stuff, but again he's been doing it a lot longer than I have and he knows what he's doing a lot better than I do.

This is a huge risk, but the urgency of having something on the line to motivate me is part of this place too. Because if something doesn't work that just means I gotta work harder to make it work or I gotta get creative and come up with something to directly engage people. That's why I decided to name it Faith/Void—to me there's a lot potential here. It's not something unless I dedicate myself and work towards it. I want to expand the community's reach at well. There are things going on that remind me of the punk DIY ethic. For example, Toronto has an amazing underground comics scene. I see some of those people at shows and participating in those ways, but I would love to see those people directly engage with people in my community.

2019: It is so funny to be reading about my insecurities, anxieties, lack of experience and lack of foresight—maybe my sense of naivety is what allowed me to keep pushing forward despite all the challenges and roadblocks, both personal and otherwise. I really was motivated by a sense of unbridled idealism, optimism, and urgency that exceeded everything else, including better judgement. I already knew that selling records (let alone those that were the output of niche subcultures) was difficult. I knew that the city did not (and does not) give a fuck about DIY venues and actually worked towards making them nonexistent. I knew that I probably wouldn't be able to take a serious financial hit if things didn't pan out the way I had hoped they would. I knew all this and I did it anyway. I think I have to just sit back at this point and appreciate the insanity of it all

I find it ironic that we were referring to F/V as a more permanent fixture versus a temporary one. Its existence has always been unpredictable in nature. I don't know that the temporary nature of a space is enough to motivate people to want to be involved in it at a larger capacity, or to not take it for granted. I think it depends entirely on the individuals that make up that particular community, what those individuals actually want, and whether they are willing to work towards it for each other.

MRR: It's a brand new place and you already have a person doing an art show that isn't a punk. What quality do you see in these people that makes you want them involved?
2015: Most of the stuff I carry—zines, records, art—I want it to have at the very least have some sort of subversive quality to it. The way I see it, this is a platform. I want to use that platform to show art, music, and individuals that want to challenge the status quo in some way or have a voice that doesn't necessarily have a place in mainstream culture or society.

GAZM

MURO

S.H.I.T.

2019: My intention for the space was for communities to utilize it and make it what they wanted it to be. All the while it was my job to sustain it financially through the shop. Over the years it was many things for several different communities. My only real concern was that they were doing something that challenged conventions, expectations, what was accepted by the status quo, or what was possible in that space.

MRR: Punk obviously vacillates in many ways as to what punks think subversive looks or what it feels like to others even within our own community. Do you think punks have expectations of you politically or visibly or do you feel there is any pressure on you in that respect?

2015: I put a lot of pressure on myself. Being active in anything as a person of color is important to me personally, and I went for a very long time being involved in hardcore feeling the same way I felt in the past in respect to not necessarily seeing people who look like me or being active in that capacity. The people who were most active and making things happen generally tended to be white and male. I had a long period of confusion and difficulty wrestling with that idea. SHIBGB's inspired me because suddenly there were really diverse group of young people involved. All of a sudden I was seeing really young people in bands and people of color really engaged. Everyone was really productive, inspired and fired up about things—it was very refreshing. Ten years ago when I first met and started hanging with my bandmates, things were really different and right now things are really exciting.

I'm taking a huge risk and dedicating all of my time and energy toward something I love. I am hoping that being someone who is visibly identifiable as a person of color and doing this can provide to others with some of what I couldn't get a decade or so ago—I want them to know they can do it too. Again, I've never done this before, I have no experience doing this, I just want to. Hopefully, being visible and what I am putting into it inspires others to do the same, maybe not at this capacity, but whatever capacity they are comfortable with.

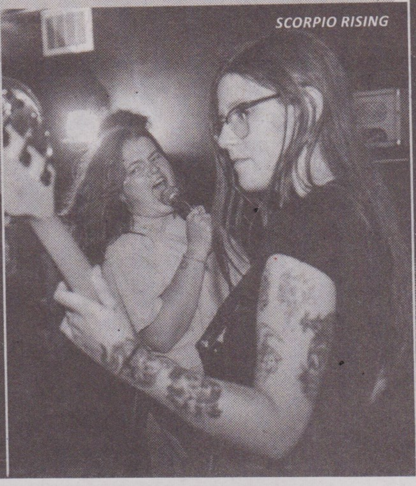
2019: I think that in most instances where someone is doing something on a public or visible scale, there is always pressure from outside parties. There will always be opinions and criticisms regarding how that thing should be done or how it could be done better. That's fine. My own expectations were the ones I had to reckon with the most. Over time, managing my own perceptions and how they affected my actions became more important to me than how they might appear to others. We exist in an increasingly performative society and punk is no exception. I believe that it is far more vital to be aware of your intentions, stay true to the core of your motivations, and let that be the foundation of what you do and how you go about doing it.

MRR: As punks we always want to check out punk spots in other places, and you were saying that as a punk and a person of color, it's important for you to have visibility through this space. Is that an intention of the space to have other punks of color look to Faith/Void as a a space for us?

2015: Absolutely. Through traveling with the band, it has been amazing to meet other Asian punks and share experiences that only we can understand uniquely. It's so affirming and energizing to hear somebody else share your point of view and experience. That's something that's fairly new to me. Until I started traveling with the band and going to other cities I never got that. I am reminded of an interaction I had with an Asian person outside of a gig we played with Fucked Up. The crowd was made up of people who we weren't familiar with and who weren't familiar with us. I remember feeling pretty strange playing to that crowd. I was outside feeling totally out of place and this Asian dude approached me and told me that he had never seen an Asian person look and act like that before, that seeing me front a hardcore band was

S.H.I.T.

SIYAHKAL



SCORPIO RISING

something completely alien to anything he had ever experienced. He wasn't even saying he liked it, he was more expressing a form of shock and disbelief at what he had witnessed. That really stuck with me. From that point on I considered the way I perform and present myself in front of people completely differently. I realized that it can affect people's perceptions and maybe even challenge stereotypical expectations. This became really important to me and I thought about that responsibility a lot more.

2019: Visibility is obviously very important. Marginalized people in visible roles help to show what is possible for others. This will always be an important part of what I choose to do, inside and outside of punk. I wanted to make Faith/Void a place where the underrepresented could feel welcome and comfortable being involved with what was happening there. More importantly, I wanted to show people that there were opportunities to be seen and heard, and that if those opportunities didn't already exist for you, you could create them yourself.

MRR: Not every space that is punk has to have an intention, which is great too. But opening a place that has this as part of its intention isn't usually the case in punk.

2015: Well this came from something else that was already established and that I was already involved with. So it's something with a past. The intention was already part of something ongoing.

2019: The experiences I had through SHIBGB's and through being a POC fronting a band were what directly influenced my intentions at the time. They were the most profound experiences I had through punk at that moment and the most empowering. I wanted to share those experiences with as many people as I could. I wanted others to have that sense of freedom and empowerment.

MRR: Do you think the Toronto scene is representative of that? Do you think the Toronto scene reflects something that is happening all over the world in punk, or is it something exclusive to what SHIBGB's was or even just what you and your friends think punk is or should be?

2015: It has to do with punk as an international thing. In the recent years, especially because of how connected we are, I'm not looking at things inside this a bubble anymore. This is happening everywhere and people are doing it everywhere. Everybody has to deal with their own issues and their own challenges in their own places, but we also have the ability to learn from those things as a group and work together in that way. There is no way I would risk everything I've worked for in the past ten years on something if it didn't mean so much to me. This is what I want to show to people who maybe just know Toronto and maybe can't see the outside of it. To me that was huge, seeing how things work internationally not feeling like it's just this.

2019: The things I witnessed while travelling with the band really blew my mind. It was the first time I could really experience the international network of punk in a direct way. That was another element I wanted to bring to the people in our local scene. It was very inspiring to see other people making this thing happen all around the world, navigating challenges that were unique to those locations and helping each other out. It provided a sense of perspective and was incredibly humbling. Important, considering it's so easy to find ourselves trapped in our own limited perceptions.

MRR: It makes sense, punk is cultural, it's subcultural, it's local, so why wouldn't Faith/Void reflect that?

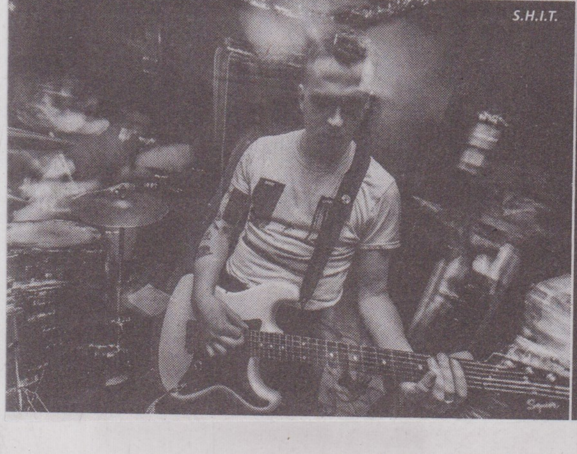
2015: Yeah, being in a band being able to travel is a huge privilege and I realize that it's not necessarily open to everybody, so I want to make this place reflective of that and what I find motivational, what makes me feel like this more than just one thing happening in one place at one time. Maybe people aren't in a band, maybe they can't travel, maybe they aren't able to see this stuff outside the internet—I want a physical space with real things that other people have made and taken risks on and dedicated towards this space as a way to show people this is happening elsewhere, it's bigger than what's just here.

MRR: Speaking about the longevity of this space, having a space like this is also a privilege. A lot of places don't have the opportunity to have a place like Faith/Void. Reaching out to small towns in Canada or across the world is really important for other people to gain that exposure, so when something happens in your own scene that sucks you realize there is a whole world out there to explore and if you want a branch out, there are welcome places for you. Have you thought about wanting to be here a long time?

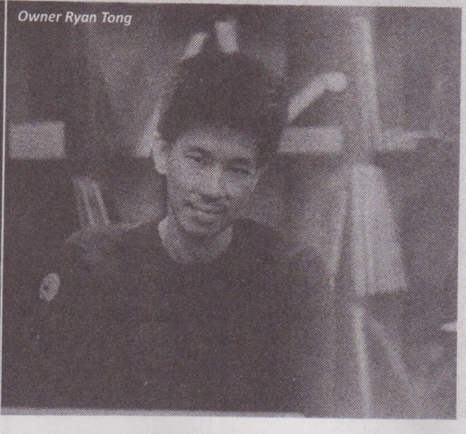
2015: Absolutely. Since this is learning experience for me and it's new to me, I think that the more time that I have to learn and gain experience from this the better it will be and maybe make it a thing that can last. Right now my commercial lease is two years and that's a small window I can work in to see if it will work or if I have the ability to make it sustain itself. I just started but I believe that I can if I stay motivated.

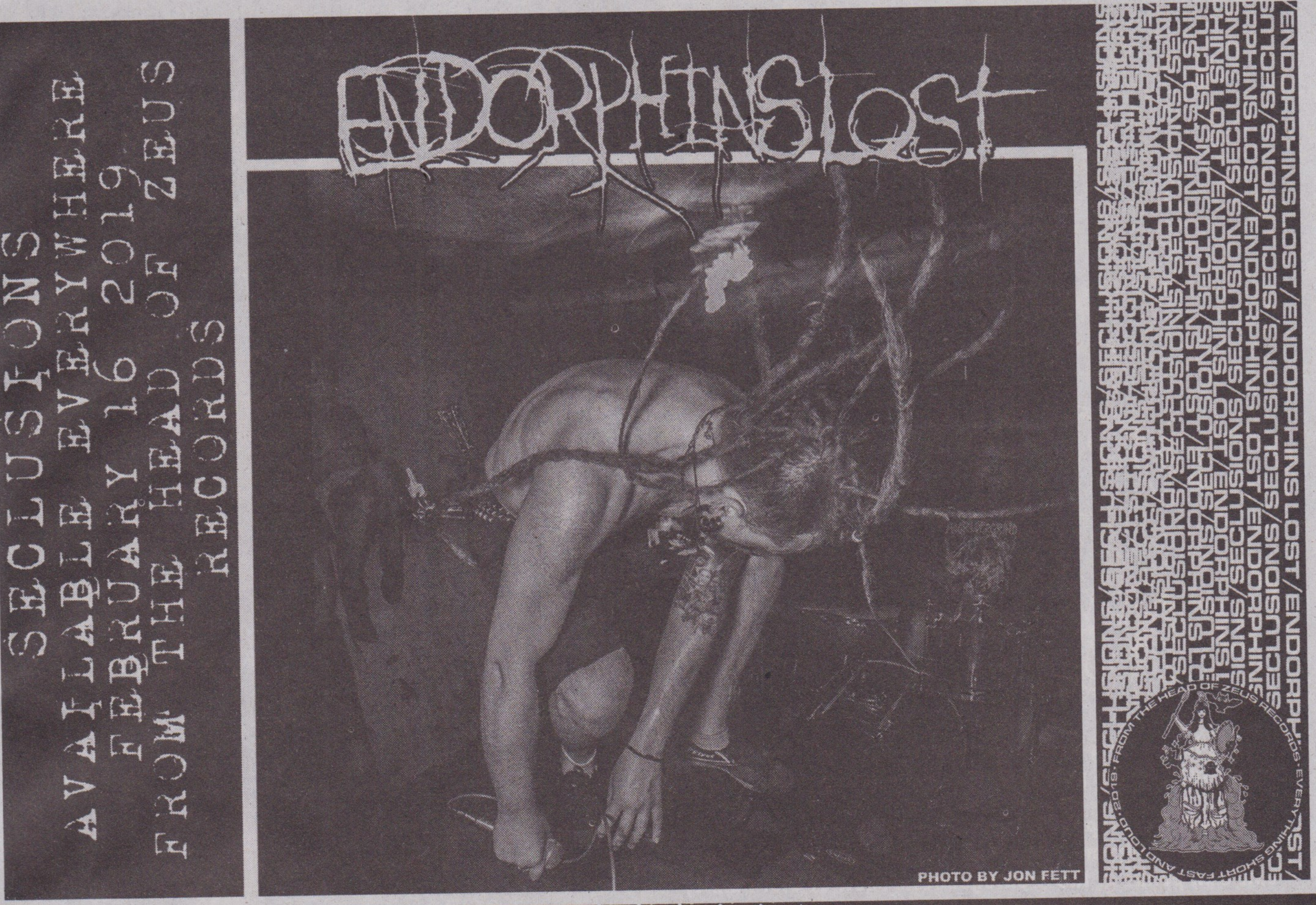
2019: We are living in an age where virtual existence is treated as a material extension of shared reality. I think it is more important than ever to connect people with each other and with culture in real spaces. My aim with Faith/Void was to bring the physical output and artifacts of subculture into a space and use that to connect people with ideas intimately. I wanted to foster a space where culture was constantly being created and not just consumed and where the two could cooperate to sustain a real presence for an extended period of time. I feel successful in doing that. More so than at any other point in my life, I am exhilarated for what comes next. Where in the world will I find myself and how will I apply what I've learned? What are the people of Toronto going make happen next? How will punk and subculture at large have to change and adapt to effectively keep challenging the status quo? I'm so excited to find out.

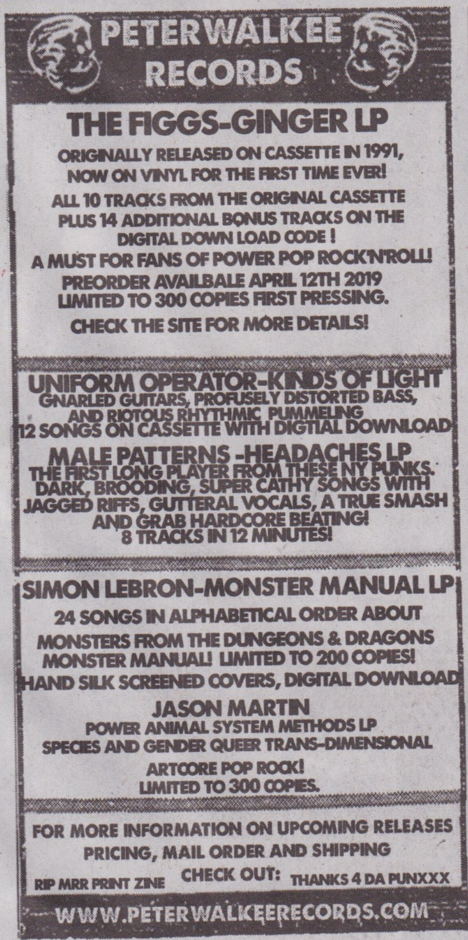
Faith/Void closed its doors at midnight on February 28, 2019.


S.H.I.T.

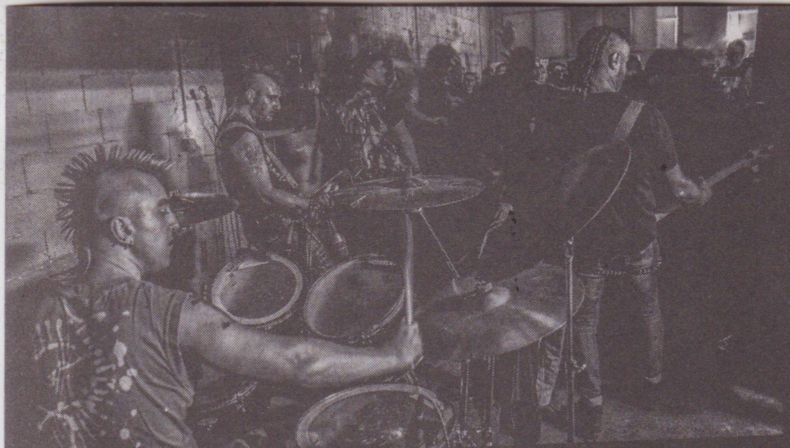
DOXX


Owner Ryan Tong


ENDORPHINS LOST
SECLUSIONS
AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE
FEBRUARY 16 2019
FROM THE HEAD OF ZEUS
RECORDS
PHOTO BY JON FETT


PETERWALKEE RECORDS
THE FIGGS-GINGER LP
ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON CASSETTE IN 1991, NOW ON VINYL FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!
ALL 10 TRACKS FROM THE ORIGINAL CASSETTE PLUS 14 ADDITIONAL BONUS TRACKS ON THE DIGITAL DOWN LOAD CODE !
A MUST FOR FANS OF POWER POP ROCK'N'ROLL!
PREORDER AVAILBALE APRIL 12TH 2019
LIMITED TO 300 COPIES FIRST PRESSING.
CHECK THE SITE FOR MORE DETAILS!
UNIFORM OPERATOR-KINDS OF LIGHT
GNARLED GUITARS, PROFUSELY DISTORTED BASS, AND RIOTOUS RHYTHMIC PUMMELING
12 SONGS ON CASSETTE WITH DIGTIAL DOWNLOAD
MALE PATTERNS -HEADACHES LP
THE FIRST LONG PLAYER FROM THESE NY PUNKS. DARK, BROODING, SUPER CATHY SONGS WITH JAGGED RIFFS, GUTTERAL VOCALS, A TRUE SMASH AND GRAB HARDCORE BEATING!
8 TRACKS IN 12 MINUTES!
SIMON LEBRON-MONSTER MANUAL LP
24 SONGS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER ABOUT MONSTERS FROM THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS MONSTER MANUAL! LIMITED TO 200 COPIES!
HAND SILK SCREENED COVERS, DIGITAL DOWNLOAD
JASON MARTIN
POWER ANIMAL SYSTEM METHODS LP
SPECIES AND GENDER QUEER TRANS-DIMENSIONAL ARTCORE POP ROCK!
LIMITED TO 300 COPIES.
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING RELEASES PRICING, MAIL ORDER AND SHIPPING
RIP MRR PRINT ZINE
CHECK OUT:
THANKS 4 DA PUNXXX
WWW.PETERWALKEERECORDS.COM

CDs & vinyl
New releases
classics
Rarities & single items via
Discogs
www.plasticbombshop.de
your German online shop for
punk, hardcore, underground
est. 1996
Band merch
Shirts, hoodies, pants, shoes, accessoires



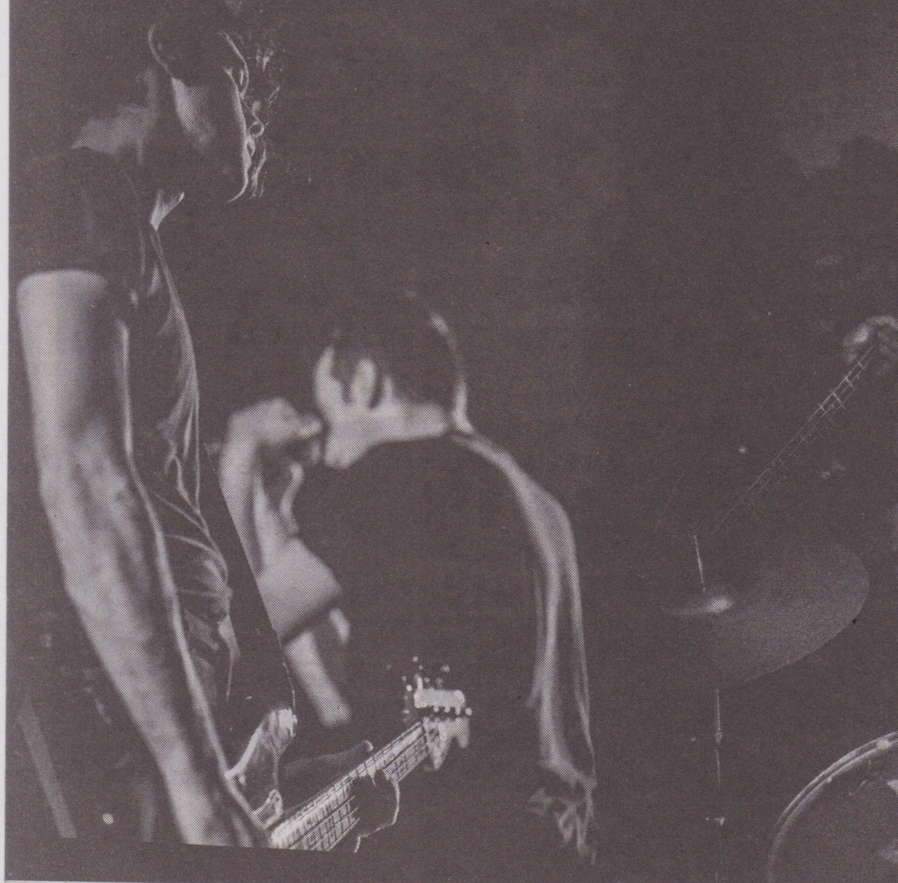
George Argyropoulos

ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

Greece is booming right now, with some great hardcore, punk, synth-punk, post-punk and darkwave bands.

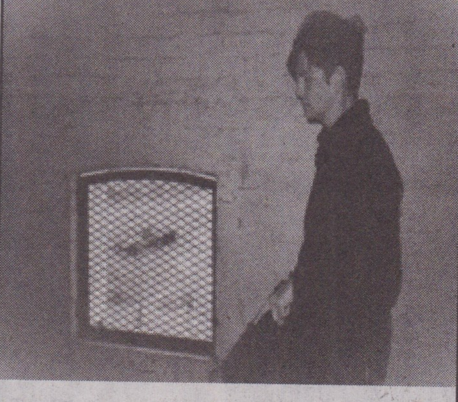
Clockwise from top left: **Karkinoma at Industry of Noise, Horis Ikto at Idryma 2.14, Chain Cult at Chaos Control fest, Law Uni, punks at the Proktogennesis show at Olof Palme, Ghostland at Chaos Control fest, Law Uni, Kolonaki SS at Olof Palme, Cold i at Chaos Control fest, Law Uni.**

georgeargyropoulos.com



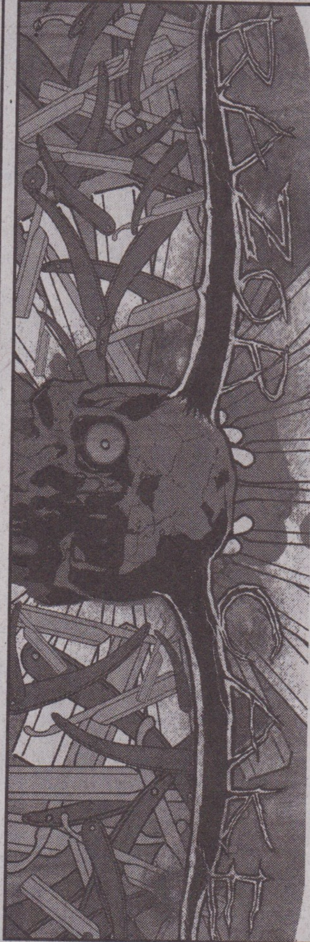
Clevers

Said it's Where I'm Standing



SECOND EP OUT NOW

www.clevers.bandcamp.com



subs start at $17

*

ads start at $40

*

distro copies start at $2 (min 4)

*

112 pages every 2 months

*

razorcake.org

SAN FRANCISCO'S PUNK RECORD STORE

THRILLHOUSE RECORDS

Vinyl, Tapes, Zines
Bought, Sold, Traded
Open
Noon to 8 Every Day

3422 Mission St., SF CA 94110

CUT LOUDER! HEAR BETTER!

SWEET DEALS ON VINYL PRESSING!!!

300 7"s - Black Vinyl + Full Color 300lb Cardstock Folds + Center Labels + Polybags $1195

200 12"s - Splatter Vinyl + Full Color 300lb Cardstock 1.5 Folds, B&W Labels + Polybags $1495

200 7"s - Splatter Vinyl, Black+White labels $1050 200 7"s - Black, Full Color labels $865

LUCKY

VINYL. CD. LACQUER MASTERING & RESTORATION

Get a Reference Lacquer, so you know how your music will sound on vinyl, before you pay for Metal Plates and Test Presses! Some Credits include: MDC, DRI, Sepultura, Slayer, Bane, Suburban Mutilation, Bad Religion, Crime, Ch13, Dead Milkmen, Toys That Kill, Toe Tag, Verbal Abuse, Los Crudos, Rats In The Louvre, Rik & The Pigs, Raging Nathans, The Minutemen, Disorder, The Faction, The Frantix, The Hookers, David Peel + Death, Ill Repute, Mannequin Pussy, No Reaction, S.O.S., Stillborn, Fistula, Disorder, HotWaterMusic, Pulley, The Wiggins, The Putz, Thee Chemicals, Mean Jeans, Crusaders Of Love, Against Me!, Panzerbastard, Die Kreuzen, Hell Bastard, The Fluid, Tad, Cosmic Psychos, The Cheaters, The Fastbacks, Kitty Kat Fan Club, Golden Pelicans,

Orders@luckylacquers.com (206) 497-3006 **www.luckylacquers.com** 6907 University Ave #224 Middleton, Wi 53562

BUSH TETRAS

Bush Tetras came out of the New York post-punk scene in 1979, offering a minimalist, jarring perspective that flew in the face of nihilist No Wave with their song "Too Many Creeps." Pat Place, the guitarist who formed Bush Tetras after quitting the Contortions, described their music and lyrics as "sexless," which went with their androgynous image at the time. Wanting to be left alone has its appeal, though, and an outsider sentiment is what makes the band so cool; rhythm and paranoia go hand in hand pretty well when you're pissed off and still want to dance. I had a chance to interview Bush Tetras at the MRR compound the last time they were in the Bay Area for a few shows.

Interview and introduction by Megan March. Photos provided by Janey Callahan, Alice Espinosa-Cincotta, Lisa Genet and Dustin Pittman.

Special thanks to Paul Curran for setting up the recording equipment, and Amy Leigh for transcribing.

MRR: Which bands got you into playing music? And who did you play with when things first started rolling?

Dee: Oh, God. I listened to music from day one. I was really lucky to be exposed to all kinds of music as a kid. My mom brought home the Beatles and the Stones and Bob Dylan. But she also turned me on to tons of old jazz stuff. She had that—I think it's Duke Ellington—saying, "there's only two kinds of music: good and bad." When I was a teenager, it was a lot of "Oh, that's what old people listen to" and I was pretty quickly taught not to think that way. That, you know, music is timeless, and there's great stuff from every era. So I try now, at my age, not to go "Back when I was a kid, music was really good. Now, the music sucks." There's good stuff now. There'll be good stuff next year. Maybe.

Cynthia: Yeah, same for me. I mean, I had the same thing. My family listened to a lot of music. And I went to art school in Cleveland and I was lucky enough to be there at a time when it was like the Dead Boys, Rubber City Rebels, Destroy All Monsters, Pere Ubu, Devo. I saw music that became a big part of my life. I saw the first Bowie show. Cleveland was kind of a hub. So I started getting into music. But I was the one in the band that wasn't in a band before. But we were art students, so we had that kind of connection of not knowing how to play really. Dee was the most proficient.

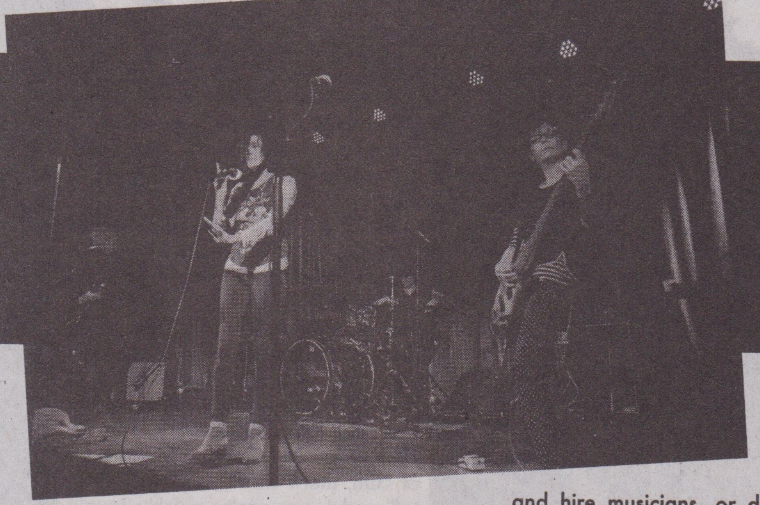
Dee: Well, I was the only one that had played in other conventional bands or, you know, played cover songs or could play a Chuck Berry song. But when we first started, really what formed us was our lack of expertise in our instruments. So we played what we could play. It wasn't a matter of trying to copy anybody. I mean, that just wasn't possible

MRR: That's how you end up with a signature sound, too.

Cynthia: We weren't self-conscious. We were just going for it. We didn't really think about what other people thought; we just did what we did.

Dee: It was actually a very premeditated plan to take over the world. Which, we're doing very, very slowly.

MRR: You formed in '79, which is considered the golden age of genres: punk, post-punk, new wave, no wave, mutant disco, punk, funk, goth,



minimalist dance. And I've heard Bush Tetras described or associated with all of these different labels, but what's a label anyways? Which if any of these genres resonates with you all the most, or which don't?

Dee: We're a country band, we play country music!

Val: You said all those labels and they went in my ear and out.

MRR: Yeah, genres are annoying, but do you think sometime people just blanket-cover something with a genre just because it's interesting and they don't know what else to call it?

Cynthia: Yeah, and I feel like when Val joined, we got more in touch then we've been, since like 1980, with our original sound. And I think it is like a chemical thing. It sounds a lot like what we used to sound like.

Val: We jam. It's not like people come in with songs, and other people make parts to them or something. It's just that we jam and are like "Oh, that sounded good."

MRR: It's organic?

Val: "Can we do it again?" Yeah that's the word. And then, I have a lot of hardcore in my background, too, and funk, and so that that probably matches up with you guys just naturally

Cynthia: You've got the funk!

Dee: But I don't think we're any genre. It's not like we go "Oh let's write a mutant disco song," or "Let's write a punk-funk-country ballad blah blah blah." It's just what we make, and like I said, it's us, and it's not like we pander to any trends or what's going on anywhere else. It's just, this is what we do and after all this time we just do it a little better than we used to.

Val: It's evolved a lot too. I mean it's a definitely recognizable sound and energy, but it's evolved so much too at the same time, which is really fantastic! And I mean, there are not too many bands from that era that are even able to keep playing. And maybe there's one person who might still perform sometimes and hire musicians, or do solo shows from back then, it's really great.

MRR: Right. Like, reunion shows when someone pops up...

Val: Right, and this one has just been going, you know, on, which is great.

Cynthia: Yeah. And we're good friends. If we don't have fun, what's the point?

MRR: So that must be the secret right?

Cynthia: Fun!

MRR: And also maintaining friendships. I mean, 40 years is no joke!

Cynthia: It is a bit like a dysfunctional family.

Dee: Yeah, but it's very democratic too. Financially, we split everything four-ways down the line with whatever it is. So there's no hierarchy in the band. There is no "I am the one that did this and I should get more credit" or something. It's very easy that way. I mean, we have our egos and stuff like that, you know, as every band does, but it keeps it in check. Sometimes!

Cynthia: Yeah, except for when we try to write a set list! That's when trouble really starts!

MRR: Did most of you go to art school?

Cynthia: Well, Pat, Laura, and I did. I met Laura in art school. And Pat went to Chicago Art School. It had an influence in the way that we put lyrics together. And plus we were all reading a lot of the same books. We were all into lots of reading. Dee was a writer, and I think we would cut up lyrics and put them together. We had fun with wordplay and that had a big part in our in our lyric writing.

Dee: We stole all the tricks from Burroughs, and all that kind of stuff.

Cynthia: Yeah. And I think we like we all like, read and had the same influences and were interested in art, and in New York at that time it was all combined anyway.

MRR: How did that influence the band, specifically?

Cynthia: A lot. There was a community there. So I think we were all feeding off each other.

Val: I was in Philly at the time, but it was just this big family of collaborations and influences and the whole thing was just a really nice vibe, energy, and support.

MRR: I bet there was a lot of cross-pollination happening.

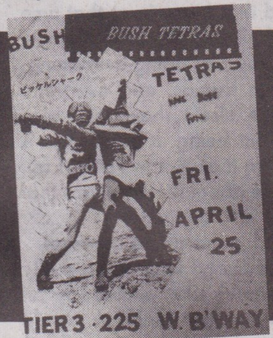
Dee: It was very open minded at that point. Patti Smith, Television, the New York Dolls, the Ramones, they were all very different. It wasn't it all about uniforms yet. Maybe it was the media trying to pigeonhole it, or give it a name and or an identity, so they could go sell it. But at that point, it was just people doing what they did. And, you know, being able to express themselves, and it was all very different. And then later on, it turned into, you know, punk rock, you had to wear a leather jacket, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And then it's gotten so split up and sub-genre'd out and you just mentioned like, what, 30 or 40 different sub-genres of, you know. What we're doing is just music.

Cynthia: My son who's like, 28, he's in a band and he plays a lot in Brooklyn, and there's a huge scene. I think it's coming around again. There's all different kinds of music, a lot of noise music. It's not commercial. And it's a real healthy scene and everybody seems to

support each other. So I think that it just kind of comes in circles, we just don't really know about it. Like, we don't go out at midnight often because it's a little late. He plays at like 12 and 1 on a Sunday, and they don't have real venues so it's really hard for them. So you know, you'll go to the Silver Door. I've gone to see him and the cops raided the place, and he can't play, so you know, it's a little harder. I think you could play legitimate clubs back then. And there were fanzines and magazines a lot more, but the feel seems to be the same.

Dee: I think what Cynthia is saying is, you know, that scene is very DIY. It's very small. It's scattered. You have to know about it. Like when we were playing, you know, when we first started out, I think there was more of something that blanketed the whole thing. You could find out about it a lot easier. I mean, back then, if you read The Village Voice on a Wednesday, there was fifteen ads for all the clubs and you could see there was so many things going on. Now there's absolutely nothing like that. It's word of mouth. You have to investigate to find stuff.

Cynthia: Facebook.



MRR: Yeah, the internet [laughter]. But you have to be invited to those shows and be in a certain sphere of people to be able to hear of it. It's still pretty much word of mouth.

Dee: It's where a lot of stuff happens, and if you don't hear about it you go "Oh man, they just came through town," or something, and you find out about it a month later. That never would have happened in 1980.

MRR: There's a lot going on. I have a question about Pat and her involvement in No Wave cinema. But maybe I could ask you guys and you might have some insights? I watched a few of her films that she did with Vivian Dick and Lydia Lunch. And they were really interesting. They were really entertaining and cool, but also had their own sort of pace. And what really struck me was the space within the scenes: the camera seemed to be capturing a portrait of the moment, and really focusing on the mood or tone, throwing conventional structure out the window. Do you think that there are some parallels between those films and the band's musical approach? Taking things organically, not trying to impose a structure?

Cynthia: Yeah, like I said, it was a community. I think everybody really hung out a lot together. And we kind of looked at the world similarly.

Dee: Yeah, I think probably Vivian, or Scott and Beth B were learning to do what they were doing as they were doing it. It was a hands-on lesson. I mean, it's the same thing as I was playing. I think we learned to play in front of people. And as we went along, we learned a few more things each time. But I think that was the same thing for the filmmakers or the writers. And, you know, everybody was just trying to do it. And the rules weren't strict. Or maybe we'd just abandoned the rules.

Cynthia: Yeah, just trying to invent something by being yourself and, and saying "Yeah, what can we invent that's..." and just be spontaneous, instead of looking at a book or a teacher or something.

MRR: Right, and to find support within your own community.

Cynthia: Yeah, they were all friends. Like, Pat was friends with Vivian and Lydia. We were all friends. So it's cheaper to use your friends in films because it costs nothing! [*laughter*] Vivian stayed at my house two nights ago. She's back in New York. She has a retrospective. She's doing new films. And they're not narrative. They're these beautiful art pieces. She's really an interesting person and filmmaker.

Dee: And Beth B is doing a documentary about New York at that time. She asked us to be part of it. We're doing a show next Wednesday in New York. We're playing at the Kitchen. And it's in honor of Lydia Lunch, and the artist Nan Goldin so she's going to document that. And we're playing. We're "the entertainment."

MRR: Cynthia, I want to ask about your vocal style and how it's progressed over the past couple records. On the more recent one from the '90s, it sounds like you were trying different vocal styles as opposed to the earlier stuff in the '80s, which I think is really cool. Was this a conscious decision, stylistically?

Cynthia: I think in the beginning, I was really scared like, shitless. I was really, really scared. So, I think my style was just fear based. And then I took some vocal lessons too, and I just think the way the songs were written had changed, and I just kind of flowed with it. It used to be that we mixed in folk lyrics, but on this one, it's all my lyrics. So I don't know. I think I'm trying to express them in the way I hear them in my head. It's a magical thing, because I will hear a melody, and then it just comes together. It isn't self-conscious. We have a song called "Out Again." I heard myself wanting to do it in a different way to fit what these two were doing. And then Pat with that jangly guitar on the top, and I wanted to fit it in. So I try to fit it in more like another instrument.

MRR: Working together?

Dee: I think we have a better sense of ourselves right now than we've had in a long time. I think of the stuff we did in the '90s—we did two albums and we had gotten back together again, really to do one show, and the end of the show we were asked to make a record. So, we were thrown back together again. And all of a sudden, we had a much wider range of influences and [were] trying to incorporate all that stuff. So, there was a lot more, you know, like, "let's try this, let's try that." And I don't think we were ruling out trying anything. But I think it's just, we have a better sense of "this is us."

MRR: Finding your voice?

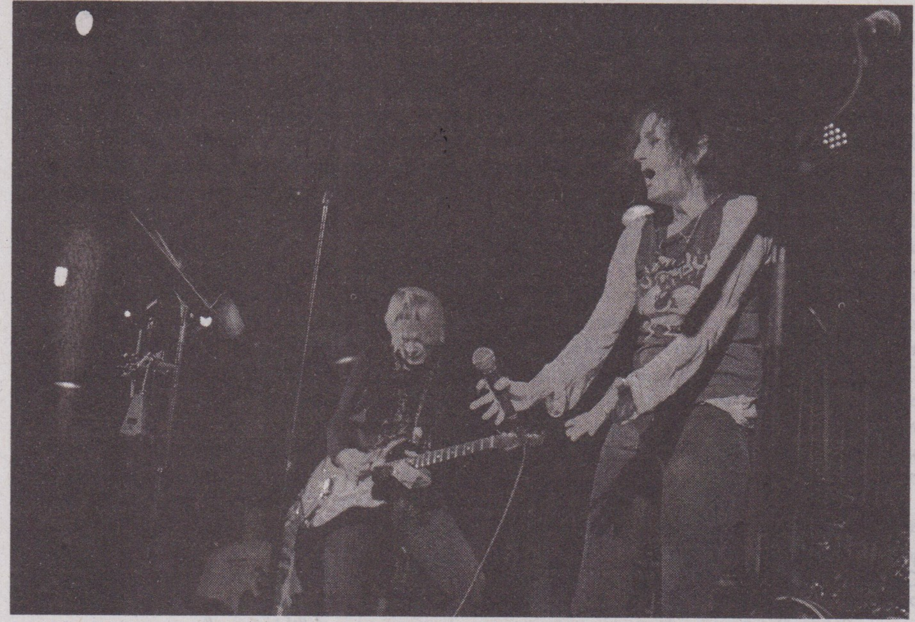
Dee: Yeah, this is our voice. And we know when it's not. It's something else that usually doesn't fly too far.

MRR: It's really unique, I think, to watch a band grow over time, because so often, like a lot of bands, they'll have their initial success and they'll be like, "well, we should quit while we're ahead," but it's really neat to see a band grow and try new things as they go along and explore their music.

Cynthia: And I think music is a hard thing to give up. You shouldn't stop when you're 60, because you're just starting to find yourself, who you are, and it's a good time to do it.

MRR: Especially with the right people to play with.

Dee: It's like, yeah, we can go out and play those old songs—which we do and we love to do. But also, there's gotta be more for us or else why bother? We can't even do some of the old songs, just for technical reasons. I mean, some of the very, very earliest things, Pat, when she played, really had no concept of the guitar neck. It was just her putting her fingers on it and making interesting sounds and then repeating them. But now when we



go like, "hey, remember that song?" and we haven't done it in 30-something years, she'll go "I have no idea where my hands were! I don't know what chord that is!" We can't even try and figure out how to replicate it. It's not like the Mel Bay chord book.

Val: Well, that's okay because the setlist question is already a really large one! All these eras! And I mean, it's not to say that that's okay really, because some of the songs are really great but it's also in any given gig it's like, what can we put together tonight for tonight that's like, representative of us, and what feels right...

MRR: In the moment?

Val: Yeah, and that there's just so many things to choose from that it's a little hard. I've been doing some math—if we take a sixteen song set, there's four-billion possibilities! Or more than that, closer to five-billion to choose from.

Dee: I think it's harder for Val than the rest of us. It's like, "Oh my god, what are they gonna throw at me tonight?" We're saying, "How about we play another song that we haven't done?" and she's like "No! God, I've gotta learn yet another?!"

Cynthia: But the good thing is, now that we have the new ones, we're guaranteed to play those. Like, we really want to. We have those it's just [figuring out] where the other ones will fit in with it. We have the '90s and we have the '80s, and we want to make a sandwich.

Dee: Well, it shouldn't sound like all the eras are separated. That's that's the thing. It should have the continuity that it's still Bush Tetras down the line. We're still playing with that formula.

MRR: I really like what you were saying about playing without necessarily knowing what it is that you're doing. Without formal attention or instruction, you can come together with your friends and just make noise and have it feel good. In a sense, it's kind of neat that it can disappear and you might not be able to replicate it. Because you're different people now, too.

Dee: Yeah, I mean, in all this time, I've learned a lot more about drumming, but there are some things that you just don't bring to the table because they don't fit. They don't work. It would be forcing the square peg into the round holes. It's not about the chops, or whatever, drum technique, you know, that doesn't work. It's not part of what we are. And I mean, just for me, when I play with Bush Tetras, I play differently than I play anywhere else. I don't know what it is. I get the same aches and pains; I get the same calluses and blisters. I think about it sometimes, like, yeah, I've learned all this other stuff, and it just doesn't come into play. It doesn't even enter my mind when I'm doing this. This is the way I play with these folks.

Cynthia: And I feel like the less we think about it, the better it is, especially onstage, too, we kind of turn into this stirring the soup thing if we just get into that. We have a lot of power on stage, I think, because it's the four of us.

Val: Yeah. We get in the zone.

MRR: What current bands are you all into? I know you were saying that sometimes it's hard to go out. But you've been playing with a lot of really cool bands, and you're on a really cool label that's been putting out some interesting stuff. Being in New York and everything, what's been catching your ear?

Cynthia: I like this band, Priests, from DC. I like the Savages. I'm interested in girls playing. I like seeing girls playing. I've seen a lot of bands that Sediment Club plays with (and they're on the same label as us) and played with this band Pill.

Val: And Palberta. Yeah the people we've been playing with have all been really great.

Cynthia: Noisy and weird bands we like!

MRR: Val, you mentioned earlier that you have a background in hardcore. Tell me about that.

Val: The Philly hardcore scene was something else. I know DC was its own thing too, and I don't even think New York really had a decent comparable hardcore scene. LA, of course. But it was just so energizing. And then again, it was DIY because Philly has never had a decent amount of clubs to play at for a starting or medium level. I mean, there have been some venues for a certain amount of time and then they close, and the cops never leave more than two open at a time, and so it was DIY already back then. There was like house parties, or if someone would manage to get a space that was condemned and sort of squat until we got kicked out. I remember playing a New Year's show at a place called The Love Club that was already being demolished, and there was no roof, and it was of course New Year's Eve and it was snowing on us and it was crazy! The mosh pit was super energetic and it was great! But there was also this big funk component with a lot of the bands—this band called the Stick Men and my band that I was in at that time called Initial Attack. It was like how it was in New York: everybody was doing everything, and everybody was friends, and everyone will go to everyone else's show, and also the same thing about being in each other's movies, and stuff like that. But in Philly, I felt like it was a lot more about the hardcore that was the most warm environment.

Dee: If you can think of hardcore as warm.

Val: Yes! Warm and fuzzy! That was a really great thing, you know? Like, somebody all spiked out with a six foot mohawk would be like "hey how you doing?" One of my favorite, best compliments that I ever got was this guy like I was just describing, he came up to me with this gentle voice, and he is like two feet taller than me, and he's like "I love your keyboards! They're like little knives in my brain!" I was like "Oh, thank you!"

Cynthia: Well yeah, weirdos unite! You know when you're never in a part of a group in high school and you're always an outsider, and then you form these weird packs with weirdos? It's a good thing.

MRR: Was there a big blur in the genre lines? Like, would people be going to hardcore shows and then also funk-punk shows?

Val: Yeah! I mean there was like a mixture. It's a better booking practice, in my opinion, whatever the city. Like, in the sense that in some cases they try to match up bands and be like touring band, sort of middle-level band that was local, and then a local starter. And they wouldn't necessarily match each other musically but that part wasn't as important, because people weren't so judgmental. But energetically, people who were booking spent a lot of time on making good matches so I saw Model Citizens from New York one night at this one show who were really arty, scream-y but poppy. And then Dead Boys played, and Iggy Pop. And

Iggy Pop wasn't really even in the punk thing in those times. He was a rock'n'roller and I thought his music was too poppy for me. And so I saw this show, and I stayed to see Iggy because he's an icon, and I just wanted to see it. Nowadays, bookers don't care. They just book slots.

MRR: Curation can be important because that's what creates a scene.

Dee: In New York, there are a lot of clubs where all they care about is if you draw crowds. If you don't draw 40 people you can't play there, and you won't get paid, and they don't care if you have anything to do with the second band. For a lot of people, you play, your audience comes, they leave, that's it. The audience has no interest in it. They don't go out to see a whole night's worth of music. Like, when we were first hanging, you know, like when I went to CBGB's or Max's or something, it didn't matter who was playing, really. You went there because it was a place to go. It was a scene and there were great bands and there were crap bands.

Val: And your friends were there, and you'd stay there. And you'd have a scene right there that night.

Cynthia: Yeah, but I think that's just Manhattan though. In Brooklyn, there's like five bands and they're all friends and they're all playing the same bills.

Dee: I mean, essentially all clubs are bars, so the owners are interested in selling alcohol. That's the bottom line and then so it's a matter of people coming in. I've run music series at different places. And if I ran an avant garde jazz series or something, the owners of the places might be thoroughly behind you with the music, but then they'll go "We gave out 50 glasses of water and sold three drinks, so, you're out of here." So, to get a space where that coexists is really difficult. I mean I did it at CBGB's and that was amazing, because I went to Hilly the owner and I said; "you're not using one of your three stages on Sunday nights. I need one bartender. I don't need a doorman. I don't need a soundman. I don't need anything else except your stage." And he loved the music. He was behind it and he was like, "Yeah, it's going to be a dark room otherwise so it might as well be used," and that was a great gift. But when CB's closed to go to another place, then all of a sudden it became like "Well, how many drinks will you bring in? How many people will you bring in? How many drinks can you sell?" And then it was like, well, I'm not trying to sell alcohol. I'm trying to present music that should be heard.

Cynthia: And their rent. The rent is so high, you know? It's almost out of their hands, It's a vicious circle, because there's a lot of places that are just closed in Manhattan because the owners almost make more without anybody in it because of the tax breaks or something. And so it's a huge problem in Manhattan now.

Val: Some bigger places have to have two shows every night. If you do the early show, you have to be out by 10 so they can start setting up for the whole next show. It's like...

MRR: [sarcastic enthusiasm] DJ nights! Because then they don't have to deal with live music. There's no band to deal with, and they can just sell drinks. Have you all been able to play a lot of DIY spaces where selling drinks isn't that much of an issue and people are there to be there?

Cynthia: We don't play out a lot. We have to weigh our performances. Like, we really wanted to come here to the Bay Area, because we haven't played here in so long. And I think we're choosing our places. I'm still teaching, so I'm going to go back and have a full week while I play and tour. It's not easy, even physically. So we're weighing it, and we do what we can. We try to balance that out.

Dee: We used to play San Francisco quite a lot! I think one our first shows was actually at Berkeley Square.

MRR: Haven't heard that venue's name in a while.

Dee: Yeah! Flipper opened up for us!

Cynthia: The Mutants we played with at that.

Dee: I think Negative Trend was the other band that opened for us the first weekend. But yeah, San Francisco is always great for Bush Tetras!

MRR: Well, I think the Bay is very excited to have you back

Dee: We'll find out! [laughs]

Bush Tetras have a new record Take the Fall, out now on Wharf Cat. Listen at bushtetrasnyc.bandcamp.com.

DESEOS PRIMITIVOS

Interview and introduction by Ali Tayadon

Photo by Jimmy Zepeda

Deseos Primitivos has become a powerhouse in California's punk scene. The four-piece, with members from both the East Bay and LA, have crafted a distinct sound reminiscent of early '80s Spanish bands like Vulpess, and have shared the stage with punk legends such as Rancid and Papi Saicos of Los Saicos. Members of the band also book shows individually and put out records on their own. We sat down over beers, tater tots and some kale on a recent Sunday at Eli's Mile High Club in Oakland to chat lyrics, the state of the California punk scene, life and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Days later, the band flew to bass player Javier's home country of Peru for a four-show tour. The band plans some more tours in 2019, and seek to put out a new release to follow their 2018 7" Existir.

MRR: First question is for Conchita: what are you singing about?
Conchita: We kind of write a lot about feminist issues, but I mean, we're all over the place. We've written a song about Oakland and gentrification, we've written songs about colonization, and the effects of that. We've written songs about the war machine...
Josh: Immigrant and workers' rights.
Conchita: Yeah, and I guess social standards on femmes and what it means to not follow those.

MRR: So what inspires that?
Conchita: Life shit!
Javier: With the title track "Existir," we talk about how it gets tiring to just walk the line...I had that song for a minute but I always thought it had to be sung by a woman, it even came that way organically.
Josh: Society expects you to settle down and have two kids and live this boring ass life and just smile.
Javier: I think a lot of what the band stands for is just trying to live your own life.
Conchita: That song and "Boba" were two of our first songs, and then "Boba" is about heartbreak and just being an idiot.

MRR: So it's both political and personal, it seems like not a lot of bands do that right now

Javier: It's honest though. It seems like bands seem to be almost too scared of being vulnerable, you're not like the hardcore dude 24/7 you know.
Conchita: I remember this time too when Javier and I were talking about colonization, and I started doing Aztec dance, and we decided ":et's do a song about it." And the next time we got together Javier had a bunch of ideas about it. Sometimes we just get together and just talk about what we want to talk about.

MRR: What kind of sound inspired the music and what are you going for?
Conchita: I think we're all really huge fans of early punk, early hardcore, '80s, late '70s Spanish punk for sure.
Josh: It's kind of a blending of certain styles or influences that sometimes you can't put your finger on exactly.

MRR: What is it about that era of Spanish punk like Vulpess and bands like that you've been compared to that resonates with you guys?
Josh: Probably Spanish lyrics and the use of chorus pedals.
Conchita: I think we all just kind of grew up with that stuff and it was so influential, and its stuff that makes us feel good when we hear it, and we definitely want people to feel good, to dance and move around when they listen to our music, and I think that early '80s music is just like dirty and simple and hard to ignore.

MRR: It seems you want people to have fun at your shows and not like, beat the shit out of each other
Conchita: Not really.
Josh: Every song isn't trying to be like more hardcore or more distorted or louder, and we're open to incorporating different styles, we're playing mid-tempo stuff and slower stuff or even stuff that's more rock'n'roll. Those '80s bands, all they knew were those rock bands from the '70s and like the Sex Pistols.
Conchita: We feel like a lot bands, whether they veered towards the post-punk scene or like the hardcore scene or whatever, everybody started sounding a little rock'n'roll in the beginning—the Cure, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Paralisis Permanente, Joy Division...
Josh: At the time I was doing a Halloween cover band for the Cure, and we jammed on some B-side Cure song. It was fun for me in that we didn't expect much to come out of it.
Conchita: They had mentioned Rata Negra and Juanita y los Feos.

MRR: Being a woman front person in a punk scene that's pretty male dominated, what's that like?
Conchita: Well, luckily for me nowadays there's plenty of front women, so it didn't feel revolutionary or anything to do this, if anything it's like the trending thing. For me it was really nice because I grew up in punk and going to shows where every band was a white boy, and trying to stay out of the pit so I wouldn't get too hurt, so it's nice to see a bunch of bands that are brown or that have girls in them or femme-fronted, it's fucking awesome, and to be a part of that movement—I feel like it is a movement—it's an honor.

MRR: You guys have all been playing in punk bands and involved in the punk scene for a while now, what are your thoughts on the current California punk scene?
Jimmy: I think that it's at its height right now, with women especially, in LA it's been going for a while. LA is a little different that here, in LA there's a lot of scenes, and what we're doing is not catering to any scene, we're open to playing with anybody. Like last night we played Gilman with a bunch of bands that none of us have ever heard about, and it was cool, we sold merch, and people liked us.
Josh: Having been involved in it for over 20 years now, LA has the bands right now. What I would say about the Bay Area scene is that its very divisive and personally I'm really sick of some of the childish games that some of the older punks will play and I hope to find out about what the kids are doing right now.
MRR: It seems like you guys are pretty well-loved in LA.
Conchita: We're not the PC punks, we're the fun-having punks, the PC punks in the Bay I feel like think they're right but they're not right...you know who you are, you're not cool you're not making anything cool for anybody.
Javier: For me it's about just keeping it real to what you're doing, and if you're just trying to make that many people happy then maybe you're not being honest with yourself about it because you have to change and compromise different things to be able to fit in one thing.
Conchita: We have not kissed ass, and we haven't tried to sound like anybody in general or fit into anything, and the funny thing too is when whenever we've had a shut door from the PC punks, plenty of other doors have opened up, it's just elitism.
Jimmy: We don't stick to one type of music, if you listen to our set, it's like an emotional rollercoaster sometimes.
Josh: You can take that to print right there.

MRR: Got it, it's like an emotional rollercoaster.
Josh: I think Anthony Kiedis put it best, "your love is like a rollercoaster baby."

MRR: I'm definitely printing that.
Josh: Next question, next question.

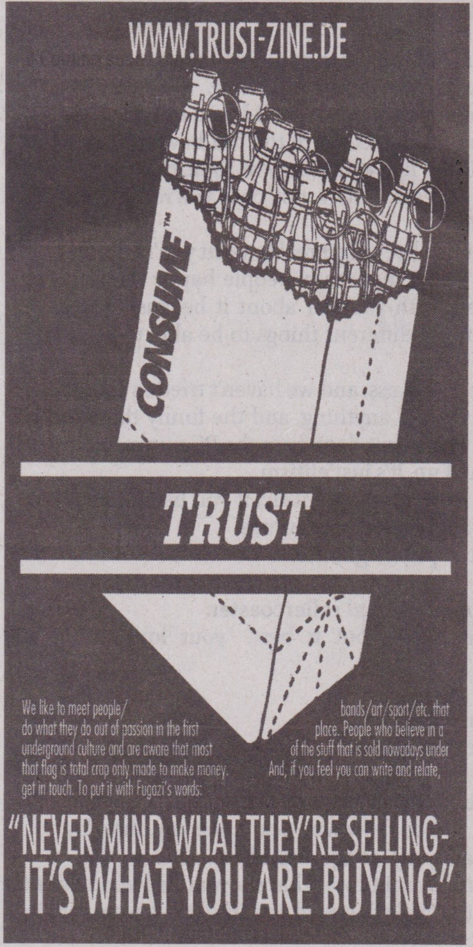
MRR: What's been your favorite show so far?
Javier: I think the Papi Saicos show was sick, it was my birthday.
Conchita: That was exactly a year ago, right here.
Josh: First that comes to my mind was that show at Redwood Bar in LA where everything just clicked, crowd was into it, we were into it, it was a fun night.
Conchita: One of my favorite shows was a backyard show in LA with the Dark, Tozcos, it was super fucking rowdy, that was the first time I heard the crowd singing back our songs and my mind was blown.
Jimmy: The Rancid show was really good. Definitely a good opportunity for us that just happened. I've known Tim for a really long time, my band was on his label, I've known him for over ten years, and we band recorded our 7" at his studio in LA.

MRR: So you guys are leaving for Peru this week, what's that like for you, Javier?
Javier: I played Peru one time when I was seventeen, and a month maybe after all my papers were already done for me to come to the US, but the cool thing about it is through punk in general and keeping childhood friends, a lot of people gave us a hand for these four shows. It was really cool to see the DHK guys say, "Yeah, come over here, and we'll take care of it."

MRR: You left Peru when you were seventeen, what's it like to come back with your band?
Javier: it's perfect, it's like my birthday treat.

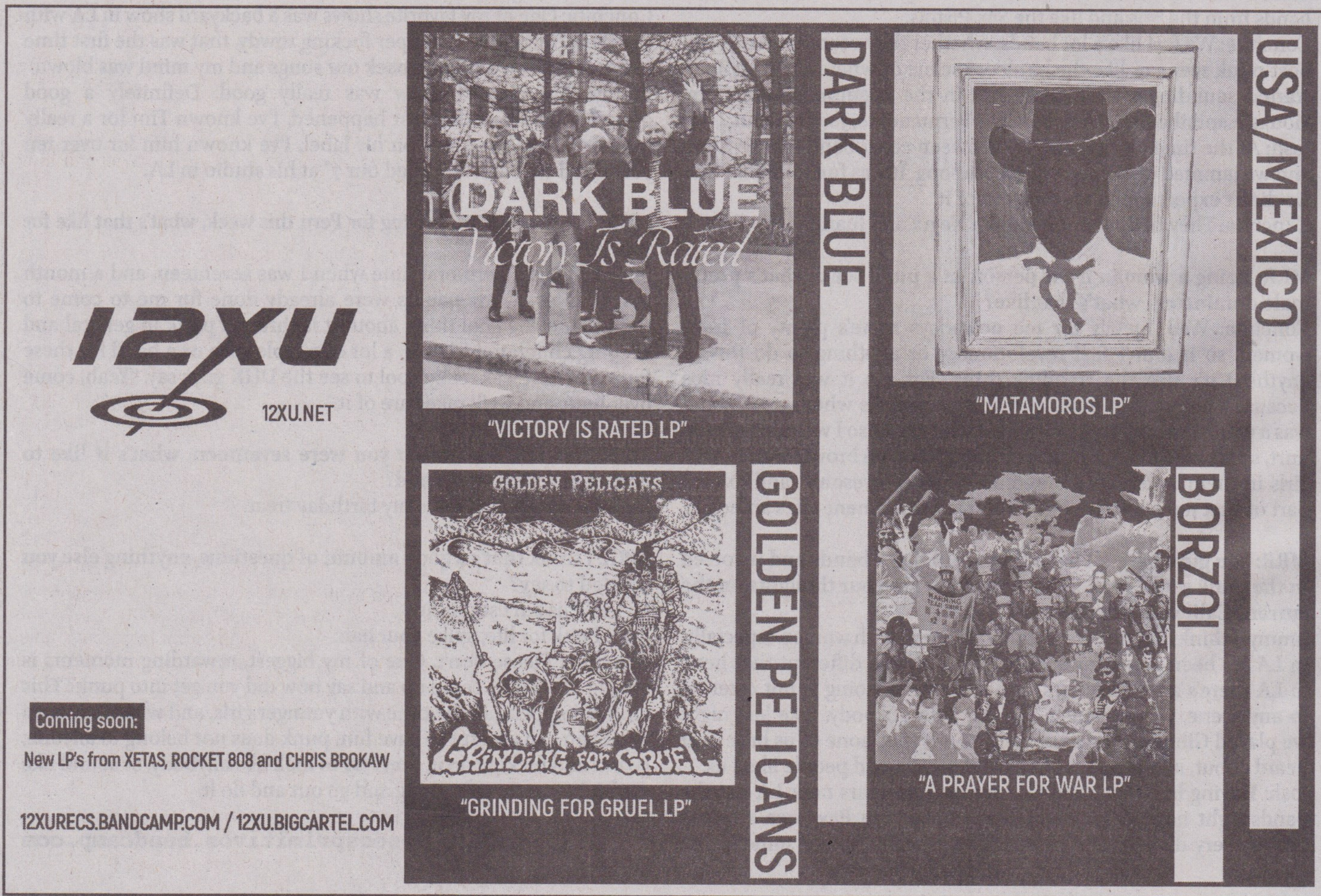
MRR: I think that's a good amount of questions, anything else you wanted to say?
Javier: This ain't stopping.
Josh: Punk for life, spike your hair.
Conchita: Please don't. One of my biggest, rewarding moments is having other girls come up and say how did you get into punk? This kind of happens all the time with younger girls, and what I say is do what you can and try to have fun, punk does not belong to anyone, go out and fucking do it, don't try to look like anybody, or sound like anybody, just do your thing and go out and do it.

Listen at deseosprimitivos.bandcamp.com



WWW.TRUST-ZINE.DE
CONSUME™
TRUST
We like to meet people/bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:
"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING-
IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

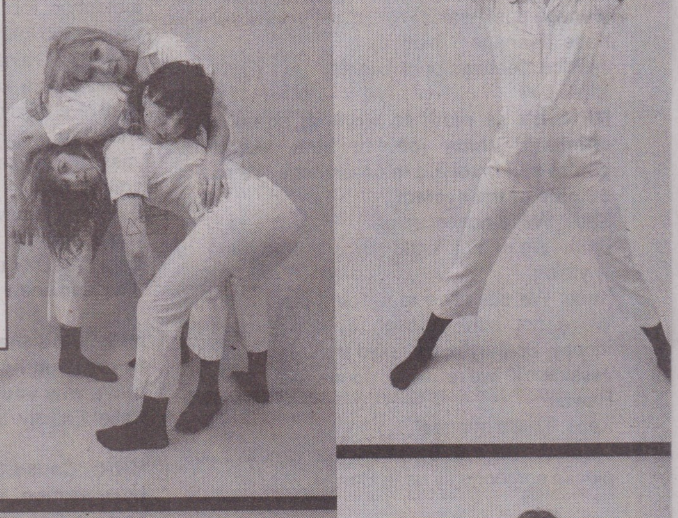
GONER RECORDS
LOW LIFE
Downer EDN
BLOODSHOT BILL
Come Get Your Love Right Now
CARBONAS
Your Moral Superiors
SICK THOUGHTS
s/t
BENNI
The Return
BAD TIMES
Streets Of Iron
SORE LOSERS
Soundtrack
QUINTRON
Europa, My Mirror
COMING:
HASH REDACTOR, NOTS 3, AQUARIAN BLOOD
GONERFEST 16 COMING SEPT 26-29
THANK YOU MAXIMUM ROCK N ROLL PRINT EDITION
GRUBBY FINGERS FOREVER



12XU
12XU.NET
DARK BLUE
Victory Is Rated
"VICTORY IS RATED LP"
USA/MEXICO
"MATAMOROS LP"
GOLDEN PELICANS
Grinding for Gruel
"GRINDING FOR GRUEL LP"
BORZOI
"A PRAYER FOR WAR LP"
Coming soon:
New LP's from XETAS, ROCKET 808 and CHRIS BROKAW
12XURECS.BANDCAMP.COM / 12XU.BIGCARTEL.COM

SUSAN

Susan is a band. Though most of the time only two out of three Susans may agree on any one particular subject, it is rather clear they can come together every now and again. On gorgeous three part harmonies, affinity/obsession for sequins, and on their very apparent love and care for each other. Three bestest friends—Jessica Owen (she/her), Beth B (she/her), and Katie Fern (she/her)—who function as an art collective producing amazing work beyond their hook-saturated punk, pop, jangley, shimmering rock tuneage. We had a snack and coffee date to talk about their current work(s), womxn taking care of womxn, gender parity, sequins (duh), dream shows of past and future, Whitney Houston, spirits of procrastination, and witchcraft practice to combat/wrangle capitalism. I thought about including text reference for every time we laughed during this interview but it would have tripled its length. I love these humans.
Interview by CJ Miller. Photos provided by Beth B



MRR: Since you are all my friends and I love you *very* much I would like to see you all get paid. I believe in artists receiving financial remuneration for their work and I think musicians should be able to tour and to have some financial security and not just like die from it. The time we exist in now, fewer people are paying for music. So let's discuss functioning as a thoughtful artist and interacting with capitalism as a band. We were just talking about casting spells and lighting candles to manifest money…

Katie: Making money and witchcraft, yeah. We were talking about it because we work a lot and we are all struggling in our own ways just to make it living in LA. And it's hard. We talked about it recently in context of touring and how it sets you back so far. You have to take off of work and even if you break even on tour expenses, you're still set back from missing weeks of work.

Jessica: And just being in a band in general you have to pay for a practice space, instruments, and t-shirts and merch…We're terrible at merch in general. I think we've left our merch at shows like two or three times now and just don't even realize it's gone. People track us down and are like 'We have your merch! Take your merch!"

Beth: "We have all this stuff that says Susan on it. Does this belong to *you*?"

Jessica: We played that show two months ago and didn't realize it was gone.

Katie: We didn't realize it was gone for *two months*. Until we played another show at the Echo and they were like "I think we have your merch suitcase."

Katie: Typical Susan.

Jessica: We aren't thinking of it like a business at all.

Beth: We're hustling to make music and to play and cultivate a community. But we're not hustling to get the money that is required to invest into your band. We could be better at it. But also it's not my favorite part.

MRR: You brought up this interesting notion that sometimes when we see people acquire some financial success there is sometimes some resentment there…

Jessica: Or judgment.

Katie: You would think that we would all be happy for our fellow artists who do well for themselves but there is almost always that little tinge of jealousy. Or when somebody is successful they'll sometimes seem embarrassed by that success for whatever reason.

Beth: There's the ingrained idea that if you are successful and you get money from huge companies that you're a sellout. If you let people pay you for your work maybe your work changes because they ask you for certain things because they're the ones giving you money. So it becomes you're a sellout and inauthentic.

Jessica: Like now are you doing the thing to make money.

MRR: That's a real danger for certain
Beth: So I feel it has a stigma still from my teenage punkness.
Katie: Teenage punk!!!
Jessica: Teenage punk stigma.

MRR: It's as punk as working some soul-crushing, shitty job. In both scenarios you're still involved in capitalism. We're not outside of the system.
Katie: We're not escaping.
Beth: We're not living on our own farm or anything.
Katie: We still have to eat and have a home. We're not punk enough to not care about money. So maybe we could try a little harder.
Jessica: If we're ever gonna get flown to Hawaii…
Katie: That's our goal.
Jessica: That's what we ask our candle... Just please someone fly us to Hawaii.

MRR: What are some of the questions you think I'm gonna ask you today?
Jessica: Are you gonna ask us why our lyrics always so angry? Everyone always asks us that.
Katie: It's why we asked you to do this specifically, because I was like she's gonna come up with way better questions than most people would.
Beth: Not just why are you named Susan? Who's Susan? And why are your lyrics so angry? What happened to you in your lives?
Katie: Do you hate men?

MRR: I definitely hate men.
Katie: Well, yeah, duh who doesn't?! Everyone does. Even men hate men...

MRR: Well I know there's no Susan. But I did have a question,which is if there was, who *is* Susan? I know it's not an actual person. Let's get that out of the way.
Jessica: But I feel like we see a lot of Susans and we're like, "That's Susan."

MRR: Or like is she even human?
Katie: I always imagine Susan as either being a grandma or a drag queen.
Beth: She's both.
Jessica: I think she's a cast member of *Golden Girls* perhaps.

MRR: Like a cool guest star?
Jessica: A cool grandma that curses a lot. But I like drag queen too.
Beth: It's kind of like you could use it as a metaphor for the collective feminine spirit. Channeled into *Golden Girls*.
Beth: With rhinestones.
Katie: Like a kooky artsy old lady who drives kind of a fancy car but chain-smokes in it, ya know?
Jessica: Or like that lady that only wears lime green.
Beth: You know her when you see her. And you're like "Oh my gawd! It's Susan!" And she says "Yes. My name is Susan." And you're like "I fucking knew it."

MRR: And that's where the music comes from? Putting you into that space. And that's why you're so angry with men…
Katie: Exactly. Susan has been through a lot.

MRR: 'Cause Susan knows about it. She's been around.
Jessica: She's had a looooong life.
Katie: She's had a lot of disappointments.

MRR: You all have been friends for a while, right?
Katie: Yeah. Beth and I have known each other for…in dog years, what?
Beth: Dog years…
Katie: It's been like ten years? How long have we known each other? Forever. And we've known Jessica at least six years. We've seen a lot together.

MRR: Does it feel you're in a different phase for the band right now? Different than where you'd started?
Katie: It was more of a free for all.
Jessica: We just wanted to hang out and drink beermosas on Sunday every week.
Katie: For hours. And play guitars.
Beth: It was like being in a club. "We gotta to go to band practice." Meaning we have to meet up with our club members.

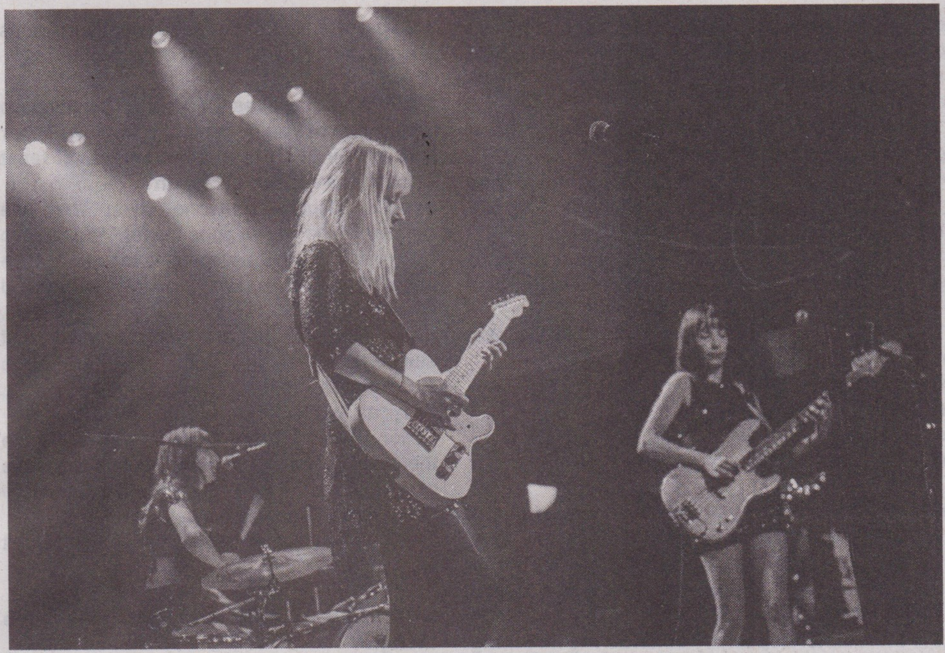
MRR: Like a cool, off the *Golden Girls* set club?
Katie: Yeah! Exactly.
Beth: We'd be like "I'm sorry. I have band practice. I'm soooo busy." And then look at us. We're just drinking beer, playing guitars, and singing *at* each other. Now we have to be a little bit more focused just because we don't have as much time.

Jessica: We have to discipline ourselves. Like if we want to record an album we can't just wait until we happen to have enough songs for an album because that will be like four years from now.
Katie: This is something we've gone through a lot lately because we're all equally epic…
Beth: That's who Susan is. She's a fucking procrastinator.
Jessica: She's a lady who procrastinates *all* the time.

MRR: She's the spirit of procrastination?
Jessica: She loves to chat.
Katie: You can talk to her for hours and never get anywhere in the conversation.

MRR: You just recorded for an album? So you had to be taskmaster on it?
Katie: Yeah. And it was hard. For us as friends, not in a bad way, but just like, oh shit, we really waited to the last minute. It's stressful. Like we were writing lyrics for a song the day before we were gonna record the vocal part for it. Just slamming it onto a piece of paper and being like "I think it's good! Whatever!"
Jessica: You're scared of having a regret that you were forced to write something too fast and you're not totally happy with the result. But that's just kind of how life goes. Most of the time you don't have enough time to prepare. Maybe it's good to not to have too much time to prepare sometimes.

MRR: You could work on a painting forever.
Jessica: There's no finish line with anything in art. You're done when you say you're done and you could keep going forever.
Katie: Worst case scenario we'll only release the instrumentation part of it and forget all the vocals.
Jessica: We're an instrumental band now.
Beth: This one is gonna be different. One of the songs we wrote in the studio and we have never done before. When we started it didn't have any words or vocal melody. Normally we have a melody first. So this was totally different. So sometimes I'm like "what are these songs?" 'cause we did them so fast and so much in the studio that I don't know how they're gonna turn out 'cause I haven't really heard them yet. When before we had a lot more time to play the song a lot and fine-tune it. We work so much faster now.
Jessica: I also think this situation we're in now makes you prepare more than you normally would. Like take a singing lesson instead of doing one million takes. Or you find yourself doing the things you have to do to get better at recording.
Beth: I think we're a little bit better musicians now.
Katie: I think just being in the room with the instruments we got better.
Jessica: It's like osmosis.
Katie: We're just channeling.



MRR: I've always thought some of the best art comes from constraint. We see these huge projects in music and film, where no one is saying no, and maybe the work suffers? So the constraint is helpful because you aren't allowed to overthink it to death. "We're gonna add twenty more guitar solo overdubs."

Jessica: Well we've also rewritten songs a lot of times and just end up back at the starting point anyway 'cause it was just the best version in the first place.

Beth: We've definitely over-workshopped a lot of songs and now there's no time to workshop. The way it came out is the way it's meant to be.

MRR: I think there are ways in which being positioned and highlighted as females in the music industry, I see as being damaging and reductive for us. There's this sexism of making it seem special or novel like "Oh my gawd. There's a girl drummer! That's so cool. Can you believe it?"

Katie: The amount of times I've heard that... People are always so surprised to hear I play the drums. Someone's like "Oh what do you do?" especially men. I say "I work in design. And I play in a band." "What do you play?" And they think I'm gonna say keyboard or something.

Jessica: Tambourine. I play tambo.

Katie: And I say "I'm the drummer." And the reaction is "Oh really?!" Crazy!" Is it really that crazy? It's not.

Beth: I've had a lot of people (men) who say 'I'm surprised you're good at bass." And I'm like "Fuck you!" Then it's just the cherry on top of everything when someone is like "Do you want me to help you carry your amp?" And after we play he's like "Oh! You guys are actually pretty good." It's this idea that it's not gonna be good because we're womxn. And if you can play, and we *can* play our instruments, even though I've previously alluded to the idea we're not very good at them…

Katie: Well that's another part. We're conditioned to say those things… to say we're not as good as maybe we are.

MRR: We make ourselves smaller.

Katie: Yeah. To not take up as much space.

Jessica: I do feel like it's changed so much in the past couple years. Like when we first started and people were like "What's your genre? Girl band?" Umm, that's not a genre. But I feel like recently because there's this movement where a lot of womxn are not down for that anymore. And there are so many more bands with females in them than there used to be…it seems like we're encountering it less. Because there's more prevalence of females making music in the world than when we first started people are less surprised by it. It feels like a drastic change from when we first started playing.

MRR: But there are still labels and promoters that are billing stuff around girls rocking in a sensationalist exploitive way.

Beth: Oh yeah. Now it's like a marketing point. Like it's just a trend.

MRR: I think that it feels OK when the event is centered on feminism and that idea of empowerment and a drive for development.

Katie: If there's a real point on making it be an all-female showcase versus it being just a normal show. It's often represented as a bigger deal than it should be for womxn to be playing.

MRR: Like that Burger-A-Go-Go thing has always bothered me.

Beth: Yes. That's felt weird. It's cool to showcase us but also you're just kind of segregating us. If you want to support womxn and you want to support feminism than make sure it's more equal all the time. In everything.

Katie: A lot more than just giving us Burger-A-Go-Go. Every event.

Beth: "You get your own special show! That's separate."

Jessica: "You go play over there!" I don't know. I agree with you but also… and maybe it's because we're in this LA music bubble but I see so many shows that aren't like "Hey, this is a girl show!" and it's just like a band fronted by womxn that doesn't mention that as much as it used to. It's still far from perfect. But I feel like it's changing. Slowly maybe. But it's hard to tell if it's just the circle of music I'm involved in. It's hard to know outside the bubble.

Katie: We have those rose colored glasses on.

MRR: Well it is valuable for POC, trans people, queer people, any marginalized people. Womxn who are fucked over everywhere across the world, to have that visibility and space. And to be promoted in that way.

Katie: On one hand you want to be validated and to have those events be available to people. Having shows that highlight queer bands, specifically. That's really cool but it's like "How do we get to a place where you don't have to make such a point of it because it's just all the time?" Queer people, we're all taught to hide our confidence. And you see it, womxn who are too confident are construed as bitches. Or queer people are afraid of being assaulted on the street, that fear of being loud and visible for who you are when you come from any marginalized group of people. Hetero white cis men don't question it because they've never had that kind of fear.

MRR: And that is a major value to these showcases that highlight these other groups because we're not remotely close to being on an equal level. But then there is tokenization and exploitation.

Beth: There should be a safe, elevating spot for that but it shouldn't just be separated and it should be inclusive.

Katie: It's kind of like Pride. As a queer person I'm really glad it exists and that there are parades all over the world. But there are a lot of corporate hands in that pot now. It's not just a bunch of DIY gay kids walking through the street anymore. There are these big corporations involved, making a ton of money off of it without putting anything back into the community they're pulling from. It's about when these sorts of events happen, how do we make them more effective to help the community and not just have it be a showcase of womxn playing guitars.

MRR: We played that show together that you organized, where we collected for the Downtown Women's Center.

Katie: I want to incorporate more of that as

part of the art. We are privileged enough to be able to have jobs and be in a band. We have to hustle a lot. But the fact that anybody comes to our shows, we should try to take advantage of that.
Beth: We talked about anytime we are putting together a show, we should incorporate some kind of donation component. People are paying to see bands play and get entertainment but it feels weird, no matter how much money gets made, that some amount couldn't serve some part of our community.

MRR: I know you all do quite a bit outside of the band, creatively. I know Jessica makes all sorts of magical clothing cause she's fashioned some treasures for me and I've also seen them on you. Are we comfortable talking about the sequins?
Jessica: I was uncomfortable not talking about the sequins.

MRR: What was the first Susan outfit?
All: The sequins!
Beth: We had talked about how it's really fun when bands have costumes. As a visual thing onstage, we're a unit. We're all together.
Katie: Destiny's Child.
Jessica: I made you that dress for your birthday. And then we had that music video that Cassie made where we decided we should make enough costumes to all wear matching outfits in the video. And then it snowballed after that.
Beth: I think we also talked about Devo? How they had the uniform.
Katie: Sequins seemed more Susan.

MRR: That is why Devo did it! I just read about it. They envisioned themselves as an R&B group. So they wanted to dress like that, with matching looks. But then they were like "How do we subvert it? We're gonna wear these little black shorts and black turtlenecks cause it's the least jock thing we can do." But it came from that same idea you're bringing up of modeling your look on R&B groups.
Katie: Like old girl groups, like the Supremes. They wear these amazing outfits and really put on a show by dressing up and they're playing a role as a character kind of. Especially with punk and rock'n'roll, everybody is just wearing jeans and a t-shirt. It's not very impressive.
Beth: You never have to worry about what you're gonna wear. You just bring your costume.
Jessica: It's great on tour 'cause you can't bring that many clothes anyway.
Katie: The stinkiest sequins.
Jessica: They get really gross after a month.
Katie: It is a bit sports teamy too. It feels like we're a unit. Like we're in this together.
Jessica: Also sequins get stuck together when you hug someone else wearing them so it's literal bonding.
Beth: And now it's evolved from the one dress to lots of short two-piece outfits.
Jessica: Yeah! Now we can just pick one type of fabric and everyone can have a matching look specific to their style.
Katie: Going back to Destiny's Child.
Jessica: We're just exactly like Destiny's Child.
There was that one time Beth found all those matching granny cardigans? That were gold and black.

MRR: Have you worn them? Has it been cold enough for them?
Beth: Haha, no. They're polyester and playing in a sweater anyway is challenging. It's like playing in velvet. It is *so* hot.
Jessica: One time we all wore matching velvet outfits when we played Echo Park Rising which happens in August. It was horrible.
Katie: Susan does not always make the best clothing decisions.

MRR: I'd beg to differ.
Katie: Well she looks great but perhaps she's not very practical.

MRR: This is something I've noticed in the time I've known you and loved you so very much, which is that you all really seem to pretty continuously love and support and lift each other up... I find it to be pretty incredible. Especially considering this thing we discussed earlier, where we as womxn in this culture and probably on a global level are taught to tear each other down. Where another womxn's success feels like our failure. There are behaviors instilled in us even when we're little girls to have jealousy and a lot of value dependent on beauty standards.
Jessica: And competition.

MRR: Yeah. And men don't deal with that. It is something very specific to womxn but you all have this supportive relationship that makes me want to cry. It translates onstage even. You thrive and help each other to do so.
Beth: I've been coming across this lately in some witchy spiritualist books I've been reading about these ideas that we're ingrained with, like scarcity. Where if you have it means I don't have it. But if you make sure all your friends around you feel fulfilled and good then you're going to feel fulfilled and feel good too. When you see your friends doing so well it's amazing and exciting and it can feel so inspiring. It inspires you to do it too. I think you all are very inspiring to me.
Jessica: I think when I first met you guys I was just so excited to meet you as friends. And then the fact that we magically just happened to play the right instruments to form a band ... I was like "*This is so cool.*"
Katie: Divine. I think that with a lot of bands there can be a lot of resentment between members.
Jessica: And criticism. Like, "You're not playing it the way I want you to play it."
Katie: We've always been more of a friendship band. We try not to be critical of each other in that capacity. It is a process. Of supporting each other emotionally. Checking in with each other.
Jessica: We try to take each other's opinions into account. And take care of each other.

MRR: What happens if something comes up where one of you doesn't like what the other one is doing? That has happened...at least once in the history of Susan?
Jessica: Usually someone cries. Then we realize "Oh no, we've gone too far!" We have to hug over it and get perspective that it's not the end of the world. And we can move on and find a compromise.
Katie: None of us are particularly all that stubborn. I feel like Beth and I are more stubborn than Jessica...
Jessica: Two out of three Susans...
Katie: This is another Susan thing! We have the saying "Two out of three Susans" because always two out of three Susans will be late. Two out of three Susans are whatever.
Jessica: Two out of three Susans' cars don't work right now.

MRR: The cosmic arrangement of the triangle?
Katie: It feels like that. But then two out of three Susans will like something and the other one won't and it can be kind of hard to navigate. But I think we've gotten better at listening to each other in those moments.
Jessica: It helps to let go of some ego when you bring something to the table. You can be attached to something but be open to hearing other suggestions about it. And I think it feels uplifting and exciting to see multiple people's opinions make a song better than it was at the beginning.
Beth: We have a friendship triangle and the music is the child of it. Ultimate collaboration..
Katie: I just feel like we need each other in our lives. I don't know what I would do without these two weirdos.
Jessica: Sometimes practice is 90% talking. We're like "I guess we should play a song. Should we? No."
Beth: There is that mean girl thing that is really common. One reason I think why I got drawn into subcultures and punk was because I don't

like that at all. The idea that girls have to be mean to each other to be successful. I've found in punk and queer communities, and with these two, more of an experience of womxn being sweet to each other and trying to lift each other up.

MRR: Getting rid of ideas of scarcity. There's enough for all of us.

Beth: Anti-capitalism. To love your fellow womxn. I can love myself and love you just as much and we will better for it.

Katie: And maybe sometimes challenge each other to be better. We're working on it.

Jessica: We read something that said to be an expert at something you had to have 10,000 hours working at it and we were like we totally have that much from practicing together twice a week for x amount of weeks. But when we looked at it we had like 500 hours.

Katie: We had 10,000 hours talking.

MRR: It's why you're so good at chatting.

Beth: Master chatters.

Jessica: We were so confident we had that many hours of practicing instruments.

Beth: After so many years and it ended up being like comically low…

MRR: Time is weird. Eschewing the constraints of time and place, what would each of your dream lineups for a Susan show be? Like if Susan got to play with like any two or three bands...

Katie: Can Susan Doyle open for us?

MRR: There are no hierarchies of dynamics and who is opening for who.

Beth: It's like who do I want to see and then just get to play a show with?! The first band that comes to mind for me is Slant 6. I love that band so much. And I would love to play with them.

Jessica: Oh she has the best voice!

Beth: Oh and she did Quix*o*tic with her sister who does White Magic.

Jessica: That was *such* a good band too.

Beth: The Shop Assistants!

Jessica: It would be so rad to play with *any* of Kathleen Hanna's bands.

Katie: Whitney Houston!

Jessica: I wanna play with the Feelies and the Go-Betweens.

Beth: What about Kate Bush?!

Jessica: Ugh duh! Kate Bush! Hello?! You just got a Kate Bush tattoo!

Katie: You did?!

MRR: I did!

Beth: For her 60th? Was it her 60th birthday?

MRR: Her birthday was the day after I got it. I didn't even know.

Beth: That's magical. Can we also have a DJ? I'm gonna say Wire and...

Jessica: And X-Ray Spex.

Beth: Wire and the Shop Assistants. And Slant 6 DJs cause I love all those womxn and all of their associated projects so I know they'll play the best music and maybe some of their own music even though maybe they won't want to.

Katie: I'm sticking with Whitney.

MRR: You just want Whitney twice?

Katie: Whitney opens and closes the show.

Jessica: Kate Bush for sure!

Katie: Well that can be on your bill! What's your bill?

Jessica: Kate Bush and the Feelies.

Katie: Oh. That's a really good show.

Beth: I would go to that show.

Katie: I can't decide! There's nothing else but Whitney.

Beth: What about GG Allin? Someone to offset?

Katie: GG Allin! Duh!

MRR: "Did you see that opener?!"

Katie: The GG fans are gonna be disappointed also maybe. They're gonna be like, "Who are these fuckin' bands?" They'll probably leave or start a fight.

Beth: It's a social experiment.

Jessica: No one survives.

MRR: Are there any current pieces of art or just anything in the realm that is making you feel sparkly and not want to die in 2018?

Jessica: Pony Sweat.

Katie: It's a piece of art.

Jessica: Knowing it's there. I'm not kidding. Pony Sweat is the most sparkly thing I've experienced all year. It's hard to feel sparkly this year.

Katie: I went to the Broad recently and saw this installation that almost made me cry. It's a room that has all these different screens spread across different walls and hanging in the center of the room and above each screen is a little speaker. Playing on the screens is footage of all these different musicians spread across this giant Victorian house, like there's someone sitting on the patio and there's a guy in a bathtub playing a banjo and there's a couple in a bedroom...this beautiful environment and they're all wearing headphones, playing along to the same song. Then each speaker in the installation room, above each of the screens that are focused on the particular musician, the speaker is playing just their part of the song so you can hear it all together depending on where you stand...but as you pass through the space you can hear each person playing individually. Something about it was so powerful. I couldn't even stay in there very long because I was so emotionally overwhelmed. I had to get out of there. I started physically shaking. It was so intimate. And what it conveyed about music. That anyone is making things like this out there made me feel hopeful. Also it had been a long time since I had the chance to go to an art museum and I sort of forgot how wonderful and powerful it can be to experience.

Beth: Nature and Pony Sweat are inspirations. I'm very thankful to live by the ocean. I'm not great at it but I surf and love it so much. But it's weird 'cause it's also a boys' club. Just like so many sports. But to paddle out and there and ride a wave. It's like being a child.

Katie: Yeah. Where am I the happiest? The ocean.

Beth: If I could take all my friends and put them on one surfboard on one wave...that is the only thing that would be more fun.

MRR: So if Susan, as a band, not the entity or spirit of procrastination we were talking about, could enter into another endeavor together what would it be?

Katie: Riding a giant surfboard together!

Beth: A twelve-foot board with as many people as we can fit.

Jessica: Or a fifty-foot surfboard!

Katie: Beth will be on the bottom, Jess will be in the middle, we'll be holding each other.

Jessica: A tower of Susan.

Katie: Acrobatic surfing.

Beth: We've talked about owning a warehouse together that has a Victorian mansion inside of it.

Katie: Like a Turducken.

Beth: I heard it actually existed somewhere in the Inland Empire where these punks had a warehouse that had a Victorian house inside of it. And I was like, that's what Susan needs. So we live in this house but also throw shows and events.

Jessica: Backyard show also warehouse show at the same time.

Katie: We talked about having a rehearsal space with room to work on our other art and also see each other all the time. And anyone else who wants to join in and live with us can come. Self-sustaining. Susan life hack.

Beth: Somewhere near the water though so we can surf.

Jessica: Or there's a wave pool inside the warehouse.

Listen to Susan: volarrecords.bandcamp.com.

THE WORLD

Watching the World play is like riding a time machine back to an era of Modettes and New Age Steppers 45s, when punks got taken by the possibilities of dub and funk, while retaining the taut stripped down sensibilities of the DIY ideal. A dream sound, music for post-punk girls and louche rakes that takes down the mediocre reality of the consume or be consumed culture we are doomed to die inside, lo-fi scratched up punk genius. Who can deny a band that writes eloquently about that and Gary Panter's food choices? This interview is from some time in 2018, and since then there are more side projects (you gotta listen to Naked Roommate!) and a new 12" that is about to emerge on Microminature Records… Interview and introduction by Layla Gibbon. Photos provided by Mark Murrman, Juliet Juarez, Layla Gibbon, Bobby Valentino, Ezra Gonzales, Hugo Rodas...

MRR: How did you first get into music? What was the thing that kind of sucked you in?

Amber: My mom was really into pop music, like C&C Music Factory and Ace of Base. I remember my mom telling me at four, "This is what a criminal looks like," and pointing to George Michael in a leather jacket. That was probably my first fascination with bad boys and music. We lived in LA so we would cruise for hours just for fun and I'd look at the cassette fold-outs. But as a teen I got into punk. And I picked up a bass when I was sixteen but didn't feel much connection to it. I figured out like two bass lines. One was Mankind? And [the other was] Flux of Pink Indians. I was like, "Alright that was fun. Next." I loved the stuff, just didn't feel like playing it. So I put it down for a while. It wasn't until I was about 28 that I picked it back up. Post-punk was going on then so...

Andy: What, so like 1978?

Amber: I mean that wave of it that was hitting around that time—

Elyse: You mean the Libertines?

Amber: No! Whatever was happening in Oakland about five years ago. It was all dark and brooding. I thought it was silly. Anyway so I figured out what I didn't want to do which was enough motivation to get me into playing.

Elyse: I started banging on pots and pans when I was about three or four. And I always wanted to be a Broadway star. I always liked singing. When I was about

seven I would start pulling kids in the neighborhood to make films with me but they always had to play secondary 'cause I had to be the lead. When I was eleven my dad asked me if I wanted a hamster or a drumset for my birthday and I said a hamster and I got a drumset. So that's how I got into drums. I didn't do it for years, then I got a DUI and had to do community service. Started playing drums again through Girls Bay Area Rock Camp. And that's where I met Alexa, and that's how I got into my first band.

MRR: Forced community service.
Elyse: Thank you state of Texas.
Stanley: How did I get into music? Uh...Probably through my grandparents, listening to the radio. It would be like '60s Rolling Stones or '50s Frank Sinatra. And like Jazz. Thelonious Monk. They were into records. Your turn, Alexa.
Alexa: I don't know. My parents liked new wave when I was younger. They liked Devo and Squeeze, all that stuff. There were a bunch of cassette tapes that I'd listen to. I guess I just got into playing music in junior high school. My best friend was this crazy music prodigy and she taught me how to play bass. We were both really into the Ramones.
Andy: For me if—
Stanley: Don't forget this is for *Maximum Rocknroll.*

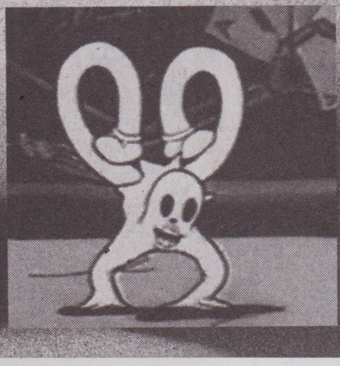
MRR: Yeah, if it's not punk, you're banned.
Alexa: Don't worry, she's gonna take out everything that's not punk.

MRR: Yeah, I'm just gonna put "Exploited" there.
Amber: Replace every time Andy says "Cuts" with the Exploited.
Andy: Yeah, then Watty taught me to play. OK, I'm gonna answer the question. If the question is the first music I responded to, then my parents tell me it was the Wild Chapatulas and the Talking Heads. That was really early on so I don't necessarily remember that. I don't know what that says. But as far as playing music, it was after I discovered '70s punk when I was a teenager. I guess it would be when I got into grunge when I picked up the guitar in my preteens, really.

MRR: It seems like the World is on tour a lot and Rays are on tour a lot, then you have Alexa in 50 bands...and they all have distinctive sounds. It couldn't be just a roll of the dice of like, this song goes to this band and that song for that one. How do you write specifically for each?
Amber: I can imagine it's a challenge for these guys 'cause they are a part of the music writing for so many different projects. But as far as the World goes, I'm the main music writer and I don't have any other bands. It's my one and only. So no distractions. I got it easy. Oh, except one project it was a one off.
Elyse: That was about a month ago. Launderette, played here. One show.
Alexa: I tried to play violin.
Andy: You should bring violin into The World.
Alexa: I'm really bad at it. It's like I'm in elementary school.

MRR: The other day I was walking down the street and I could hear this kid practicing. It was so horrible and insane, it was like avant-garde music.
Alexa: That's what I'm going for, I'm not trying to get too good. Although I was really disheartened when I found out the violin player for Raincoats had a college degree in music.

MRR: So that's cool, you're the main music writer.
Amber: Yeah, I mean everybody here can be trusted. I just come in with a bassline and lyrics and let them add to it. I never really know what it's going to sound like in the end.
Stanley: You help with the arranging .
Andy: Amber and I live together so, she comes up with the base



of it and lyrics. We sit down and work it out together.
Amber: Our songs are typically only two parts so arranging isn't the most complicated thing. I just come up with the initial idea but then it evolves 'cause everything else is in everybody else's hands.

MRR: I like that idea of the bass almost being like the lead. Kind of like New Order and dub records.

Andy: Yeah, dub and like dance records.

MRR: I was listening to the Lithics record—they seem influenced very much by the same post-punk as you guys. I was thinking of the context of "post-punk," which now seems to just means this goth-y thing. But it was actually just people making up just what was next. You know steering away from the dogmatic nature of punk. Post-punk was like this kind of freeing thing. It feels like we're coming back to that. I like that things can be fun and don't have to be dour and righteous, you know?

Amber: Yeah, Lithics are one of the more interesting bands, and I'm seeing a lot more instruments being used in punk bands too now. You know? Like xylophones. I wanna see a marimba. Or a violin. Not saying it's me. Just wanna see it.
Alexa: Stanley has a viola.
Stanley: I had a viola before I had a saxophone.

MRR: Did you know how to play the saxophone before you were in the World?

Alexa: Yeah, I mean...we don't really know how to play.
Stanley: I still don't know how to play saxophone. I just know how to play the songs that we play.
Alexa: We have been improvising for years, we don't know what notes are what.

MRR: I remember reading this review of this band that kind of got me into underground music. It was Huggy Bear, they would make me tapes. They were in this other band called Blood Sausage. So this review said, "Jo can play any instrument, much like Brian Jones." So now you guys are like my version of Brian Jones. Like, "here, let me get that sitar out."

Amber: It's you Alexa. You kinda have a Brian Jones haircut
Andy: It's funny though, it's kind of like the lack of that technical ability in a way that keeps things simple fitting into the right kind of spot you know?

MRR: But that's why I think it's kind of cool because you're keeping it clean. You're not filling up the space with like, crap?

Amber: Keep it simple.
Andy: If you don't know how to do all these technical things you won't get too muddled up with too many notes.
Alexa: You get a little...
Andy: Muddled up with too many notes sometimes, I know. I feel like Amber used to have to be like "No. Don't do that." But I feel at this point we're actually to a point where...
Amber: I haven't had to say "no" in awhile.

MRR: So you come from a more "rock" background?

Andy: Yeah I guess so but so do they. Stanley and Alexa are definitely rockers.
Stanley: Yeah, I mean, I like free jazz too.
Alexa: Yeah what? We like the '60s.

MRR: But can you listen to a song and just play along to it?

Alexa: Sometimes, it depends.
Andy: Alexa is a great guitar player by the way.

MRR: In my mind that kind of how you guys are like. Like kind of intuitive. Often times with women in music they use that which is kind of annoying. "Oh women, are from the Earth" and it kind of writes off your knowledge and your experience.

But I think with you guys it creates kind of a weird tension that is cool where it's the combination of both worlds. Like when you listen to John Cale, he's a genius but then he's fucking with it.
Alexa: Yeah, totally. I was listening to him today.
Amber: It's nice that we have a good amount of talent in the band. I'm probably more of the circumspect one, who has to know what's next and what I'm doing, but then these guys can go a little more wild.
Andy: I think it's not so much that we're all some kind of weird, I don't know, renaissance musicians who can do anything. We just have enthusiasm and just wanna go for it. It's simple. The music is simple and intuitive, I don't know how to explain that. It just is.
Amber: It's just easy. We just play and new songs just kind of lock in quickly.
Stanley: We just have chemistry. Everyone knows where the other is coming from without really talking about it. Andy and Amber can come in with a song in one band practice and then there it is, that's how it sounds.
Amber: It's because no one really has a set idea of what the song is going to be. It makes things a lot easier.
Andy: You think so?
Alexa: Yeah, so we're just pleasantly surprised by what happens. We're just like "Yeah, let's go with that." Instead of having some auteur coming in with a vision everyone has to fit into so it's easy. Just seems like such a grueling way to get into music.
Andy: I think we all just try to play very little with the auxiliary. The drums and bass are the core. And we like to leave a lot of space which almost connects it to something like reggae. Just a form of music that all starts to sound the same and it's just a way of playing.
Amber: Like for "Managerial Material," Andy came up with a little guitar line and I didn't know how to play it. I tried to figure it out and I ended up figuring a counter melody that was different notes but within the same scale. It ended up sounding pretty cool but I couldn't tell you what the notes are.
Andy: It's experimental. It's just a form of playing. Like if we approached any song or cover it would just sound like us.
Amber: I agree. I do want to add to what you were talking about. About women being more intuitive and blah blah blah. It can be annoying. But, I mean I think it is different. If you look at it in a way of summing up our, what we've inherited at this point, we're encouraged more to be quiet and observe. Be supportive. So when we do decide to make some noise it just sounds different. Maybe more thoughtful, cutting, or I don't know, just different. Something about not being represented as much makes you not become a cartoon of yourself. So maybe yeah, having these two guys in our band who are obviously talented, handicapped by a new instrument or being told "no" in Andy's case, helps. That and having us ladies lead the rhythm has, yeah, created our way of playing.

MRR: So how was Europe? Was it insane?
Elyse: I honestly thought the drive were gonna be shorter but we had to wake up around 7:00 a.m.
Alexa: We spent a lot of time in our sketchy van.
Elyse: I still had a great time, I just thought it was gonna be different.
Amber: We thought we were gonna see things!
Andy: Well, you can't ever on tour really.
Amber: I loved the shows out there.
Alexa: They were all really different.
Elyse: They were. I have to say, we went to a record store in Paris, who had sold out of our records. They had ten of them.
Amber: French people love us. [*laughs*]
Elyse: Yeah that "funky booty punk." That's what was coined in Lyon.
Alexa: Lyon kind of felt like Oakland. We played a warehouse show there. Then we were playing a little wine bar in Bordeaux with families that were really groovin' which was really sweet.
Amber: They fed us in the room that we were performing in which was really tiny. So everybody had to move out while we ate. And when we were done feasting on these delicious cheeses and salads, they folded up the table and it was time.

MRR: So it was like performing food.
Alexa: Then in Toulouse we played in this jazz squat. They have these crazy jazz shows there and it was all DIY.
Amber: Yeah Le Infant Savage. It was kind of like a political space. Older improvisational jazz crowed. Really beautiful old building with a shared common yard in the back. It was nice eating eggs there in the morning. Then Paris was of course just a regular bar. So we had the full spectrum there.
Alexa: Then Strasbourg.
Amber: Oh yeah that was a big venue with John Maus. John Maus fans are just totally nuts over him. They couldn't care less about us. [*laughs*]
Alexa: It was cool seeing him though. He came into the back after the show soaking wet going "Wet pants, wet pants, wet pants!"

MRR: My teenage band played with Beck. It was right when "Loser" came out. So it was at a big venue. He wanted us to play and it was like a million girls my age, who wanted me dead. You know? They were like "fuck off" just cos they wanted to see "Loser."
Amber: We've played larger venues. There's always gonna be some feeling of a divide. But we're always tempted by the buffets.
Elyse: We're playing the Fillmore soon with Parquet Courts, we've played with them a couple of times.
Alexa: Yeah, it's just a historical place. So we wanna check it out. Should be interesting.

MRR: Get ready for a really mealy apple.
Alexa: So there's this produce company that just delivers them a thousand apples before every gig?

MRR: I asked somebody about that. I guess it was a tradition from feeding the hungry hippies back in the day. You are playing a show with Lithics and Shopping soon right?
Elyse: Yeah, we played with Shopping in London. They were so good.

MRR: I know, Rachel Aggs is amazing.
Alexa: They're really energetic.

MRR: It's funny 'cause that's one of the things I like about watching you guys, is that there's this weird tension.
Elyse: Yeah, I feel like Amber's pretty stoic.

MRR: Lithics has a different version of that which I really enjoy. I mean I do love watching Rachel Aggs. Shopping is an incredible band to watch. But to see a band with women in it that *doesn't* do that....I mean, not to demean what she's doing.
Elyse: It's funny but my sister was at our show in London. She saw Shopping and us and she was like "You need to be more high energy like that." I don't know, I guess everyone has their own demeanor and it's okay.
Alexa: What if we were like Chuck Berry? Andy does that.
Amber: He's got some dance moves. What

are we talking about stage presence right now? How depressing we are?
Andy: I feel like I overcompensate.

MRR: I said this to them before but I like how there's this tension, like kind of awkward too. But it's compelling. It's not like, "What the fuck are they doing? Dance for me!"
Amber: I'm glad you take it that way. It reminds me of this band we played with in Vienna, Friends of Gas. Really funny name, but they were good. From Munich. Drummer was this very straightforward serious guy, could be taken as an asshole but he was amazing. Played drums like Can. They were really incredible to watch. But the singer you couldn't see 'cause she was so nervous she sung in the crowd. Kind of in the corner. She had a beautiful voice. Kind of tuff. Dizzy Eric, the drummer talked to me after and gave a really German compliment. He said I looked very nervous but he liked that. So I guess that band likes nervousness and we like it too.
Elyse: Yeah, I don't think we could do anything else or it would be really disingenuous.
Andy: What about when we do that extended dub track with Alexa on bass?
Amber: Oh then I'll get all Ari Up. I'll just be like, "Yeahhhhh!"

MRR: One of those things that I keep writing in every single one of my related *Maximum* reviews, "I am so happy to be alive in a time where there are bands who are actually referencing the shit that I'm obsessed with."Where it's not just punk bands who are influenced by Thin Lizzy or Discharge. I mean, I like Thin Lizzy...
Andy: Well, I think that's happening too.
Amber: You got Sheer Mag.
Andy: Everything is sort of happening at once.
Amber: Listening to Vexx you almost get that feeling from the guitar.

MRR: Yeah, but then they kinda fuck with it.
Amber: Yeah they make it interesting. I love Vexx.
Amber: The guitar's '70s rockish. I've broken it down. I think the guitars are '70s rock and the drums and vocals are '80s punk.

MRR: One time my band was practicing in Olympia and they were practicing over us, and I was like I just wanna put my guitar down now and go home. [*laughs*] This is so humiliating. They're so good and I can't even play a Flipper riff.
Amber: Well you don't want to be in a band where everyone is really good. I mean Vexx are, but they fuck with it. Like you said.
Stanley: Ideas are more important than how good you are.

MRR: I only like to play guitar when I'm with other people. I'm never sitting down trying to figure out riffs you know? But I like knowing that you guys are a combination of both. And knowing that you're all self-taught is mindblowing.
Andy: I'm not the kind of guy who is good at remembering other people's songs. I'm never gonna be the guy who pulls out an acoustic guitar and is like "alright everybody!" But that would be cool.
Alexa: We practiced for the first time in like a month yesterday and he forgot every song!

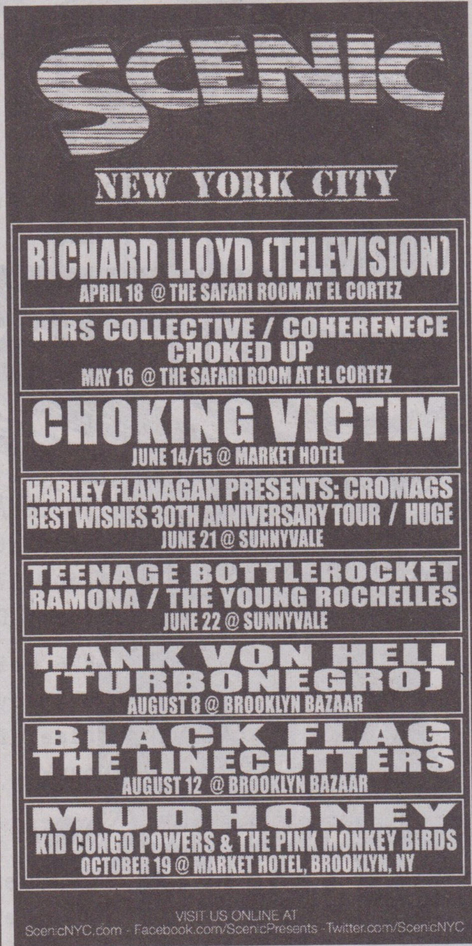
MRR: So I want to have a thing with all of your bands, like a family tree. So you guys were in Penny Machine. Was it all three of you (Alexa, Amber, Elyse)?
Amber: No, it was just us two (points to Alexa)
Alexa: Well, me and Elyse had a band before that, Pang. Then after that was Penny Machine. Simultaneously me and Stanley had a band called Turner. And a bunch of other bands in there.
Andy: Well we could do a tree but there would be a lot of other people.
Stanley: Pang and Penny Machine are more similar. The other bands are not. They're more like rock bands.
Alexa: We started Rays around the same time as the World.
Stanley: We started six months earlier.
Alexa: We met Andy at a Pang show.
Elyse: Yeah we played with Lenz at Hemlock.
Alexa: Then he was like "That was cool."
Elyse: "I want to record your record."
Andy: Yeah, me and Brett were stoked

MRR: That was the second Pang record? A classic of our times. I am obsessed with Pang. I never saw Penny Machine. But I remember getting the tape and was like "oh my god."
Andy: Well you guys barely played. How many shows?
Amber: I know. We had a tour but other than that we played like five shows.
Alexa: It was more than that. We played quite a bit just in a short period of time.
Andy: Remember when you played that weird show in downtown Oakland?
Amber: Oh you mean the one I didn't play?
Alexa: When Amber hurt her wrist?
Andy: Oh yeah! That was weird. You were just singing?
Amber: No they were playing and I was watching and it was really strange, to watch your own band.
Alexa: I had to learn all the basslines that day. Cos we didn't want to bail on the touring band.
Elyse: So you didn't sing? You were just like "Nahhh"?
Alexa: Well she sang one
Amber: They just did you know, the Sophia songs cos that was half the band. Half the songs.
Andy: Yeah, then the crowd demanded her.
Amber: Yeah, everybody was like "Where's Amber? And they started chanting my name." And that's when—
Elyse: Her ego was born.
Andy: And the day after she created the World.

The Reddish *MLP is out now on Microminiature Records. Listen at microminiature.bandcamp.com.*

FTWNU2.COM
HARDCORE
PUNK
METAL
MINNESOTA

FERAL KID RECORDS
PRESENTS
RADIATION RISKS
HEADLESS HORSEMAN
FLEXI
FERAL KID 50
follow-up to debut EP on Lumpy Records. 2 songs of bonkers, sax infused punk on a multi-layered screen-printed flexi 7"
long awaited collection LP containing all six singles, compilation and unreleased tracks, home recordings and more from the almighty
BROWN SUGAR
LONG STRANGE DRIP LP
FK 51
FK 52
"ADUMDUM" CASETTE COMPANION
cassette companion featuring demo and live tracks. limited quantities
all of this and more at FeralKidRecords.com


SCENIC
NEW YORK CITY
RICHARD LLOYD (TELEVISION)
APRIL 18 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ
HIRS COLLECTIVE / COHERENECE
CHOKED UP
MAY 16 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ
CHOKING VICTIM
JUNE 14/15 @ MARKET HOTEL
HARLEY FLANAGAN PRESENTS: CROMAGS
BEST WISHES 30TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR / HUGE
JUNE 21 @ SUNNYVALE
TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET
RAMONA / THE YOUNG ROCHELLES
JUNE 22 @ SUNNYVALE
HANK VON HELL
(TURBONEGRO)
AUGUST 8 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR
BLACK FLAG
THE LINECUTTERS
AUGUST 12 @ BROOKLYN BAZAAR
MUDHONEY
KID CONGO POWERS & THE PINK MONKEY BIRDS
OCTOBER 19 @ MARKET HOTEL, BROOKLYN, NY
VISIT US ONLINE AT
ScenicNYC.com - Facebook.com/ScenicPresents - Twitter.com/ScenicNYC

ALL AGES
RECORDS
D.I.Y.
G.B.H
ALL AGES RECORDS
LONDON
ALL AGES RECORDS
LONDON'S ONLY INDEPENDENT
PUNK & HARDCORE RECORD STORE
OPEN EVERYDAY 11:30AM - 6:30PM
27A PRATT STREET, CAMDEN, LONDON NW1 0BG, UK
TEL. (+44) 207 267 0303
www.allagesrecords.com
shop@allagesrecords.com

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL RADIO!!!
A NEW SHOW EVERY WEEK
ONLINE AT:
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL.COM

BAZILLION POINTS

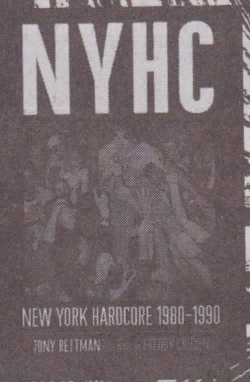
THE NEXT 40 YEARS OF HARDCORE READING...

TOUCH AND GO: The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79-'83, by Tesco Vee & Dave Stimson

576 stiff pages, the blow-by-blow regional rise of U.S. hardcore punk

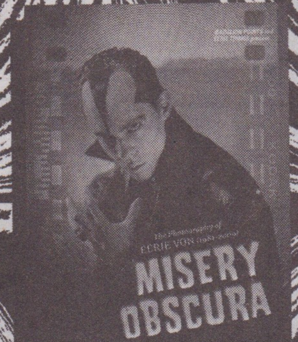
WE GOT POWER!: Hardcore Punk Scenes From 1980s Southern California, by David Markey & Jordan Schwartz

304pp hardcover L.A. originators overload



NYHC: New York Hardcore 1980-1990, by Tony Rettman

384 deluxe illustrated pages w/foreword by Freddy Cricien



MISERY OBSCURA: The Photography of Eerie Von (1981-2009), by Eerie Von

160pp color hardcover Misfits/Samhain mania w/ foreword by Lyle Preslar

CITY BABY: Surviving in Leather, Bristles, Studs, Punk Rock, and G.B.H., by Ross Lomas

304 ridiculously entertaining pages

STRAIGHT EDGE: A Clear-Headed Hardcore Punk History, by Tony Rettman

400 pages w/foreword by Anthony "CIV" Civorelli

PLUS: MURDER IN THE FRONT ROW, SWEDISH DEATH METAL, METALION, CHOOSING DEATH, DIRTY DEEDS, SUB POP USA, ONLY DEATH IS REAL, SHERIFF McCOY, TEEN MOVIE HELL...

BAZILLION POINTS

BAZILLIONPOINTS.COM

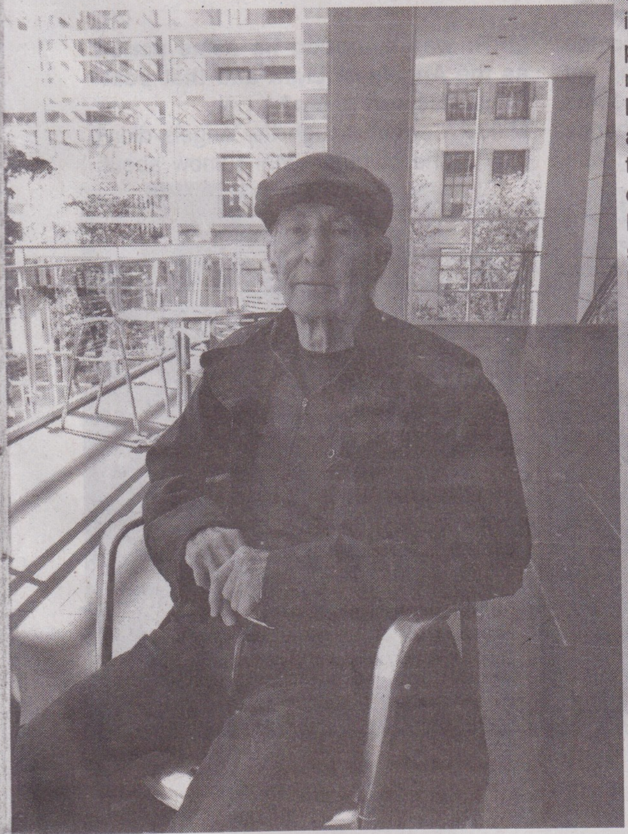
LOUDER FASTER SHORTER: MINDAUGUS BAGDON, BEAT PUNK

I met Mindy when I worked at City Lights, he was one of the regulars who stopped by always with some wild publication from his archive. When I found out that he had not only made Louder faster Shorter, an iconic film about the first burst of San Francisco punk, but has also worked on the seminal recently rediscovered LA movie the Exiles and Boris Karloff's last movie I wanted to interview him. This was initially done for another planned MRR film theme issue, the first of which I coordinated in 2008, but as you can see this failed to happen, so here it is in the final issue of MRR.
Interview conducted by Layla Gibbon

Mindy: I wrote this for the liner notes for a soundtrack to my movie that never came out: "*Louder, Faster Shorter*. Louder was always shouted by the congregation at the Mabuhey Gardens, sometimes faster was shouted and the songs were shorter, one second? Was that the shortest? I don't remember. Anyway, that's how the title for my film flashed in my mind. So if you're clear on the concept, modern warfare is getting louder, faster and shorter, of course nuclear bombs are the mothers of louder faster shorter. Bombs create bad anarchy. Punks create good anarchy. I gravitated to the beginning scene of the Mabuhay Gardens, Fab Mab in 1977. As a professional bohemian I am always looking for scenes that are able to allow what I call the *potentiation of being*; that is the freedom to develop yourself as you discover yourself. Beats withdrew to their private endeavors, hippies became engaged in the world, punks truly didn't give a damn, true anarchists, I loved them. These three historical events, (movements scenes, what were they?) still have a profound effect on world society. They were not at their beginning co-opted by capital, perhaps it is too late, I don't know, but capital is almost in your mind. Beware, capital is readying you to swallow their genetically engineered chip.

Let us move to more pleasant things, to play you need a place, be it where you live, the street, a venue, for unrestricted play you need an unrestricted playground. Dirk Dirkson envisioned the Fab Mab as such a playground. Without him and the Mab there might not have been the great punk scene in the late '70s in San Francisco. Listen to the lyrics, they are perhaps more relevant today than when they were written over thirty five years ago, World War III, or actually continuous warfare is here, but as Iggy Pop sang, let's sing. The San Francisco punk scene was fun, I missed it."

The Iggy Pop thing is from this film, I don't know if it's available still, but it's one of the best films about the punk scene on the East Coast. He's nude from the waist up, and he's looking at the camera, he 's looking at you and he says "I can't sing" and then he alludes to Lou Reed but he doesn't name him but we know who he's talking about, he says "He can't sing. Let's sing" it's so beautiful you know it's really what Iggy's all about so that's why I made that reference there. I gotta find a copy of that. As I get older time seems to expand rather than contract, when I think of something in the '80s, that seems like before the ark floated, and yet that's not that long ago.



Mindy photo by Layla

MRR: I wanted to ask you about your early years, you went to USC for cinematography, what years were you there?

Mindy: Yes, before the flood. I graduated from high school in '52 I think, it was mid to late fifties I think, I started getting worse and worse grades and that was when the draft was still in force, so I got drafted. You had to go to a center where they physically check you over before they literally put you on a bus to go to the army. During the course of doing that they give you a couple of pages of various organizations in the United States to which if you belonged to any of them you wouldn't be drafted. There were things like the Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan, and surprisingly to me there was the Lithuanian Workers Association of America through which my parents had an insurance policy for me, though they weren't per se members. Most people from European countries of my parents' generation were split into three, the religious people that were the most conservative, then there were usually the communists, you know the least conservative, then the neutrals. My mother and father would always go to the communist gatherings or the neutral gatherings because they were not religious.

I am reading down on this sheet of paper and thinking that if I didn't admit to having a connection to this organization they might draft me then throw me in jail later because I hadn't been truthful. I ran up to the Lieutenant and said that my parents had that connection, and he said, well you can go home right now, we're not drafting you. I remember going out the door and throwing my toiletries kit up in the air whooopeeee! A few days later I am sleeping at home and my mother comes into my room and says there are two guys at the front door who want to see you. They were the officials there to check me out to make sure I wasn't a provocateur or anything. I had a copy of the *Nation* magazine on the coffee table, one of the guys points at it and looks at me, "You read this?!" Once they found out I wasn't making bombs they drafted me. I was just another number. Actually when I was in the military station in Germany I was on the first line of defense against the Russians and their collaborators if they rolled across the borders into Western Europe. But I was very lucky because it was between the Korean War and the Vietnamese War, I got to see a lot of Europe, I had friends living in Paris. I didn't have to shoot at anyone. But I didn't graduate from USC

because I got drafted.

I had started getting small part time jobs with documentary film makers in Los Angeles because I was majoring in film, then when I came back (from being stationed abroad) I was married, and I really needed to work. I contacted all my friends from USC, one guy actually gave up a two or three day gig that he had and I got back into the business. That's how I started working in film, and I did that in LA probably until the late '60s and then I moved up to San Francisco. I just needed work, I got hired at City Lights Bookstore, I was there for five years. One day when I was at the cash register this guy came in, he happened to be a fellow I had worked with in Los Angeles and he told me how to connect with jobs in film. It was a very good time in San Francisco lots of small film companies and movies being made so I got connected back in.

MRR: When I was looking at IMDB the first thing that was listed was a movie you helped make with James Merchant at USC (of Merchant/Ivory) using Indian miniatures, then I saw a movie I had watched at the Castro a little bit ago called The Exiles was on there too. That was an incredible movie

Mindy: Oh that's the first complete movie I worked on, apart from student projects. Kent McKenzie, the director died a few years ago. That's in the Smithsonian National Film Registry. It's one of the great latter part 20th Century documentaries period, it really gives you an insight into these people. They're from different tribes, and they can't talk to each other, other than in English I mean. They wound up on Skid Row in LA as you see in the film. That was a delight to work on. I saw my first street fight working on that film; I saw a lot of real life that I probably would not have seen other wise.

MRR: So you talk about being a synthesis of beat, punk and hippie

Mndy: Well I still love the Grateful Dead, and if I told that to a punk during punk times they would've thrown me out of the Mabuhay Gardens! When I was being discharged from the army, I had been stationed in Germany and we took a vote while going across the Atlantic, which took a while, you know eight to ten days and we wound up in New York. So because I was a corporal I was put in charge of a small group of guys getting on a plane to fly to the Oakland army base. I picked up a book at the airport randomly, I had no idea what it was, *Nature Man and Woman,* it's a by Alan Watts and it was the first book I'd read that took apart the classic religions. I swooned reading it on the plane; it was like god was talking to me, or like someone was telling me something I wanted to know in a really lucid way. When I got to the Oakland army center and they cashiered me out I headed straight to North Beach.

I went to Enrico's, which at that time was a happening place, I don't know if Caffe Trieste had come into being yet, but if you were anybody, a poet, writer painter, drifter, bohemian—that's where you were. I remember having a Coors and it tasted like bitter water compared to the real German beer so that was another wake up, and I made a conscious decision. I'm going to become beat, and this was what I perceived as a true world. I didn't know about William Burroughs or anyone, I just knew that this was what I wanted to do. And that was my downfall! One book, and it's the beginning of the end! The end gets further and further away but there's the beginning! As soon as I got the first inclination that there was something going on, where do I sign up! Where do I get my card! What are the dues?

The way the punk scene developed was really wonderful, rock'n'roll became this bloated thing, in order to put out a record you had to go into the studio with a symphony orchestra, it was out of your hands. Vale at the time was living with a woman named Vermillion Sands, and they had a blues band. Vale is a really good pianist and bass player, and so when I got to know him at City Lights Vermillion was walking up Grant Avenue and the drummer for The Nuns was handing out flyers for a show at the Mab, and there was no punk scene and there were no bands yet! Somehow because I was seeing Vale almost every day at work he said we gotta see what's happening at the Mab, and there were more people on the stage than there were in the audience! And then we saw the Dils, and it was just exciting.

It's funny I always had friends who were much older than me when I was in college, then by the time I got into the punk scene it reversed! When the Nuns found out I was 45 years old they almost collectively fainted! But I fit into the punk scene, no one said, "Hey what are you doing here, you're old!"

MRR: It seems like the San Francisco scene was a little multi generational, you know you and Vale and Bruce Connor

Mindy: Well, yeah but not by a lot, most scenes tend to be full of young people because that's when you're trying to figure out what you are and what it's all about. By the time you get to a certain age either you've calcified and become an old codger or you're still trying to figure out what it's all about. But anyway, within a week of this show, word got around and it was clear that was where you wanted to be, at the Mabuhay Gardens, and you cannot believe the change. From nobody in the audience to the point where you could barely get in the door. Dirk had come up from Los Angeles, he was some kind of a television producer, and I never found out what happened, did something happen where he had no choice but to leave? Were the money people holding up a shotgun, "get outta town!?" You know I really had no idea, but it had that feeling. He was a really intelligent person and initially he wanted to do a sort of vaudeville programming there, there was this group the Nicollettes who wanted to do something there.

MRR: was it around he same period as the Angels of Light and that post-Cockettes sort of era?

Mindy: Correct though the Angels didn't play at the Mabuhay that I know about.

film still from The Exiles

The Nicolettes were the girlfriends of the Mitchell brothers, (the owners of a strip club in SF) so it had that porno aspect. I think the Nuns approached one of the owners of the Mabuhay, which was a Filipino supper club, people would show up in nice suits and ties and it was meant to be a sort of classy place. Right away Dirk realized that some of these groups were making an interesting noise. And he requested that people submit a cassette, and some photos and then I'll put you on. He didn't care what you did you know, there were people who got nude on stage, as long as you didn't burn it down. They did trash the men's room so everyone had to use the ladies…

They served food there but it devolved quickly to spaghetti and meatballs because it was so much easier for them to make a big fifty pound drum of spaghetti than traditional Filipino food, but that got taken away because pretty soon the spaghetti was being thrown on the stage. Dirk was pretty perceptive; he realized if he made gallons of popcorn the damage would be less intensive. Popcorn isn't going to take out anyone's eye! That's how the scene developed, Dirk was very perceptive, he was a good comedian, he knew how to ridicule the punks. In my movie he says I know you don't have to get up early tomorrow because you don't have to pick up your social security check, he knew they were scamming everything. But the punks loved that; here was someone who knew who they were. Dirk I don't think had an enemy in san Francisco, when the Mabuhay folded and he was living in the Mission, I mean correct me if I'm wrong but he never wronged anybody, I don't think he ever didn't give a band money you know? I mean maybe if there were two people in the audience he wouldn't give them money, but who knows! Maybe he would. Most of these kids had minimal jobs if at all, and as Bruce Connor said some of them wanted to be the next Doors, but most of them just played the music because it was fun. Just for the feeling of being at the Mab! Dirk allowed people to do anything, they could strum a made up chord and they'd get a slot! People were ready for something new. Bruce Connor said some of them only knew one chord, you'd have the two or three chord crowd too, but the one chord crowd could get on the stage too, that's how you'd learn to play music One chord one night, then by the next night you'd have a second chord!

MRR: That makes me think of this band I really like, the Inflatable Boy Clams

Mindy: Oh they're from San Francisco! That was one of the women from Pink Section. People would just start another band, and nobody would fuss, everybody just did that, it made it really fun and joyful because you would get a different iteration of a sound or another lyric, another take, it was just wow!

MRR: I read an interview with Pink Section where they talked about how lives in an SRO in North Beach and they only had to work three days a month to pay the rent because they all lived there. As someone who works relentlessly and still only just about makes my rent that was eye opening!

photo of the Mab by bobby castro

Mindy: That was just about the last time that was possible, before the internet started and everything just went through the roof, you could get a storefront in the mission for fifty bucks a month! The San Francisco Bay Area economy is now the 19th biggest in the world, the tech industry makes more money now than New York City I've read, but here you have this first world and third world city and you have a nation of sheep, trapped in their iphones and on the internet. I think that punk is the last true moment, unless something crazy happens because we're becoming too controlled and it's a very subtle control. I think Guattari said the problem of fascism is how we come to desire our own control.

MRR: Vale always says that punk died in 1979, bring the guillotine down, whereas I feel like the culture is much more amorphous, I think Hip-Hop and punk, because they are both DIY cultures that you can make on your own terms with limited resources, are true continual global forces. I mean they are global phenomenon because you can make them work in the context that you exist in with minimal resources. MRR hears about punks in Algeria, in Indonesia, in places that I am sure were hard to imagine punks existing in 1976 you know?

I mean now with the internet it fumigates so many ideas globally, some of which are good and some of which are bad, and you can't stop that. What you say about the punk thing, I tend to agree with that and I don't know exactly how to articulate this but there's a certain thing where people are so seduced by the media, particularly hand held devices like iphones that mitigates the fact they are getting together as human beings. It doesn't matter that you can access a friend via something like Facebook; it's still going through the channel of control, rather than you just using your own eyes and ears. You're being subtly manipulated by a created reality, whatever that is noone knows.

You know, no movement starts in a vacuum, the impressionists supposedly got their start because oil paint started being available in tubes so they could go out into the country side and paint unimpeded. The beats probably got their start because gas was so cheap, and you could get a used car for nothing in that era you know. The one interesting thing about the United States after the Second World War was the economy was starting

to develop so a workingman could afford a house, a car *and* to send his kids to college. You can't do that anymore unless you're wealthy! These are apocryphal statements. It's not exactly the way it happened, I'm telling you what I saw. You know in California all the GIs raised their families in places like Orange County; the husband's hopping into bed with the woman next door, the wife is starting to take diet pills and speed, and the young kids saw all this and they realized well I don't want this kind of life. And that's to me how the hippies developed, they grew up in a booming era and yet they wanted to have an aesthetic life, and some of the people figured it out by reading Thoreau or whoever else they read and some people simply followed their friends. It doesn't mean it's any less significant.

The music was so joyful, you want to know how I learned to dance? I was one of those shy kids, I mean my mother tried to teach me how to dance for school dances but I just didn't get it. I didn't get the rhythm, I mean I'm not athletically inept, I learned to rock climb, I have physical control of my body but I just didn't get it. I saw other people dancing at school and I just didn't get it. Plus I was shy to ask a girl to dance. When the hippie scene started and saw everyone dancing, no one was doin' that waltz style touch dancing, they were moving freely, and I just got into dancing, it looked so fun, I just had to do it! I just remember the first time, I went out and just did it and I felt so free. And once I felt that way I became the first guy on the dance floor. Everyone would be gathered around the cocktail tables and Mindy would be out in front of the band shaking it! Eventually I learned my own rhythm, and uh I wouldn't say I was Fred Astaire, but it was one of the great physical releases of my life, when I got out on the dance floor, it was a true epiphany. Have you ever heard of the Seeds? They were just incredible! The Grateful Dead, The Doors, Jefferson Airplane. I mean I saw all kind of outdoor gigs in the hippie times, up and down the panhandle, in golden gate park, because there weren't too many big venues yet because none of the bands were at that level yet, that came a little later, the later era Grateful Dead. They always talk about feminism being entrenched in the hippie scene. Bullshit! There was a patriarchal structure rigorously enforced! Some people are just stuck in that half way home between the monkeys and human beings that just entrenches that patriarchal structure, all the great religions are patriarchal! My dad used to say capitalists invented baseball to keep the working man from looking at his paycheck, he also said the Republicans take the whole steak whereas the Democrats just throw you the bone. It's the society of the spectacle Invented really to keep people from looking at housing, education, food, healthcare.

In a sense one of the great things about the punk movement for me was that there was a radical politics, look at Penelope and the Avengers, she's very politically orientated they were really taking a look at the culture they were in, that spark lasted through to the DKs. Then you get the popularity surge where people are just getting a Mohawk, and they are just simulating the content without any rigor.

MRR: Did you see any similarities between the mimeos of the beat generation and punk fanzines? Since I worked at City Lights I was looking at all these different archives, like Joanne Kyger the poet, she had these mimeographs where it would say "Richard Brautigan made three of these mimeos at the SF Public Library" and it made me think of the contrasting magnitude of the punk fanzine explosion. There's this interview I read with Vale where he talked about starting *Search and Destroy* and he saw those newspapers that they still give out at the supermarket where it lists all the deals. That spurred him, "I could do that, if they do that it must be really cheap, I'll do it that way" I was thinking about that because like Richard Brautigan made three copies of his mimeograph and then Vale was inspired by this like mass produced thing.

Mindy: Oh yeah I still have issues of *Sniffing Glue,* but I can't say that I paid much attention to punk fanzines, so I can't really address it. Oh I remember the flyers being very topical, some of them would allude to something that had been in the paper that week, but for me it was more about being *on* the scene, rather than to think about the scene. I never even thought to write criticism, I mean I'll say it in conversation, but...

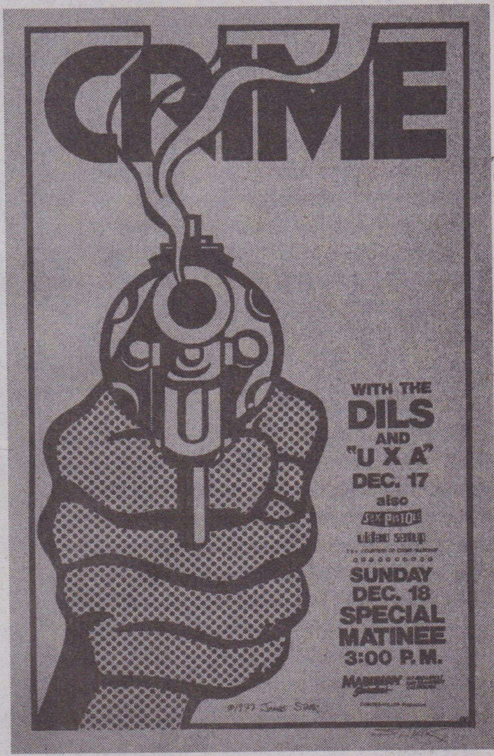
MRR: When you decided to make *Louder Faster Shorter* did you have funding?

No, the way it came about was that I'd already worked 25 years in the film business. I worked on every kind of film you can imagine from high-brow to pornography! I worked on a zombie film with Boris Karloff one year before he died. It was a Mexico City production company, and the reason they came to LA was because his doctors forbade him to go to the altitude in Mexico City. He would arrive in the morning in a chauffeur driven Rolls, and the chauffeur would put him in a wheel chair. I was a camera assistant, that was one of the main jobs I had in the film business, but I did everything else. One of my favorites was being a dolly grip; that's the guy that pushes the dolly that has the camera on it. It was like building a little miniature railroad. I love mechanical thing; that was why I was a perfect character for being a camera assistant. But I realized after being in the film business for so long that it was time to make a film myself, and I originally wanted to make a movie about the Nuns. A noir-ish kind of thing, but it never gelled in my mind.

MRR: Oh, I always thought especially with the San Francisco punks there was a real cinematic style, particularly with Crime and also with Jennifer from the Nuns. She looks like she walked out of a Veronica Lake movie. Everyone sort of made themselves into an image, and it becomes an interesting and subversive comment on pop culture and capitalism.

Mindy Absolutely! Do you know how the more punk aesthetic got started in San Francisco? The safety pins and the pogo dancing? You don't see a lot of crazy hair in my film, Michael from the Sleepers has green hair, but for the most part the people look one step away from a normal office worker. KQED was airing this BBC documentary that was made in 1976 I think, and I wound up going to Ron the Ripper's house around midnight to watch this show. He was the bass player for Crime. He lives in the outer Mission. You see this closet sized nightclub full of people with spiky hair and women in safety pins and negligees and everyone's pogoing. I can't remember if this played here in 1977 or 1978, but within one week the scene changed. People came out in ripped t-shirts, hair color came in, pogo-ing came in, and that's one of the big jokes of all time. Suddenly we learned how to become "true punks."

MRR: One of the things I really like about that era of punk is that people had heard about this *thing,* but didn't quite know what it was, so they made it their own. All these people in towns



and cities all over the world were like, "I'm going to do it, I don't know what it is exactly but I'm ready for something." And then the uniform happens, so by say the mid '80s there's a really strict idea of what a punk looks like. Whereas it seems in the early years it's this wild sort of anarchic…

Mindy: yeah the chicken came out of the egg and picked up on punk as a look! It's funny during the punk times I would end up in the Tenderloin a lot because there was this club that put on punk bands there, a dozen or more of us show up in leather jackets and no one would try and fight us. I always thought that was really funny, because none of us could fight very well! Punks had a very good image. The image sometimes is the most important thing. This could be a culmination of the beat-hippie-punk aesthetic that I have within me having been a part of all three, but I have always felt *you do it*, DIY, be what you want the world to be.

Well, this benefit for the striking coal miners was coming up and there were fourteen bands, seven per day for two days. One of the guys who ended being the cinematographer on the film said that it might be a good idea for you just to film the bands you know, so I talked to him. Bill and his wife Susan came on board and it was just reciprocity. I worked on a lot of features and a lot more commercials and that's how I ended up making my movie because it was a reciprocal kind of thing. You know, I work on your film, you work on my film. The two principal cameramen on my movie were professionals, they knew exactly what to do. One of them was married to a film editor and she's the one that cut my movie, she was also a musician so she had a real sense of rhythm and time. I would not have been able to ever make a movie myself if I had not worked in film because I found how you make a movie through practical work, rather than just reading about it in a book, I had worked on movies for so long that when it was time for me to make my movie I knew exactly what to do. I knew where to put the cameras and all of that.

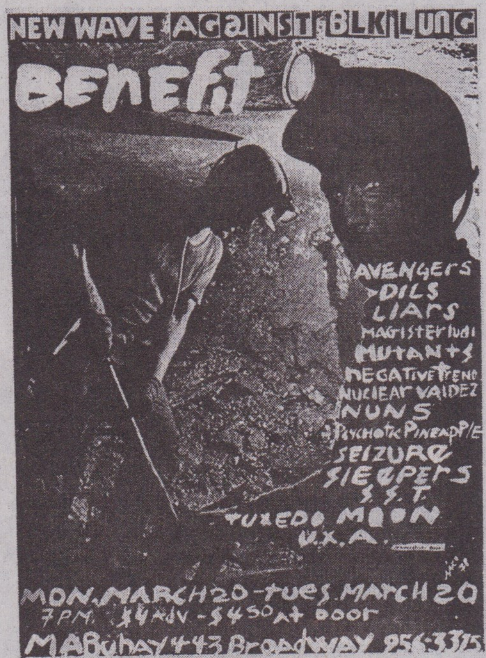
The one thing I missed the most was The Nuns, they were one of my favorite groups. Out of all the groups that played I wound up with five in my movie, I just couldn't get releases for The Nuns because of the wonderful manager they had, Edmund Heaven. A great name. He was a fellow who worked in an ad agency and he thought The Nuns were going to become the punk Beatles. He looked at me like "Who are you? You're not Steven Spielberg I'm not going to give you my group" Unfortunately the group is long gone, several of the people are dead…

We have the footage of them. There's one shot that's so beautiful. Jennifer Miro, she was the pianist for the Nuns, she was just beautiful, she had this white, white hair. She was sitting at the piano facing the audience and the camera man had this great idea to put her out of focus so she looks almost like a blob of white on the screen and then as the drum beat starts the camera focuses, and she comes into focus and you see her. It was a difficult thing to figure out if you could say cut, you can't, you're working in real time, the audience is there… Hopefully that will be released sometime, they were a really great group. One of the singers was Jewish, he wrote a song called "Decadent Jew" and when The Nuns were going to open up for the Sex Pistols Bill Graham couldn't stand it, you know he had been in a concentration camp in Europe. He didn't get it. But I think they did end up opening for the Sex Pistols, maybe Graham ate his words I don't know.

It cost me $6500 to make, maybe the equivalent of $30,000 today, and all that money basically went to raw stock, you know film, though some was donated, and laboratory costs, negative cutting, and maybe a few thousand came out on video cassette, betamax and VHS, though I don't have any figures on how many were made. I've never gotten up to that $6500 yet! I was only getting a buck every time one sold you know. I'm in the process of negotiating with Steve Viaduct for a reissue so maybe if that happens I'll pay off that $6500! But no, I've never made money. Dee Dee Detroit from UXA has always asked, "Where's my cut" as if I'm making so many millions that I'm going to be able to give you thousands, she has no conception of how these costs are. Anyway that's how it came about, it was just the luck of the draw that I was making money working in film, so I was able to finally make a cut version of the film. We showed it at the Mabuhay soon after, and even then I wasn't even thinking about releasing it. I'm always wondering how many copies exist around the world? I mean I don't mind about people making copies. It got shown at the San Francisco film festival within a year of when it was made, it's been shown at the Castro, at the Roxie

MRR: I saw it at the National Film Theater in London, Vale brought it, that's where I saw the Screamers Target video too.

Mindy: The interesting thing is how long a life it's had, you know last year there was a guy who filmed the punk scene in Zurich in the late '70s and he found out about Louder Faster Shorter and it showed at a film festival there. It keeps going on and on. There was a German/Franco company that found out about it through the Pacific Film Archive and they wanted to use thirty seconds of it for a documentary they made about the music scene here. It had some great Hendrix footage in it too.



Forra was a short-lived band based in London. They play a form of raw, catchy, and confrontational hardcore punk; wild, fast, and free just the way I like it. They are dispersed across borders on three continents now and I thought it was important to document this inspirational and invigorating group before the memory faded.

Interview and introduction by Grace Ambrose. Translation by Samara Ornelas and Grace Ambrose. Photo by Gaby Ujueta.

Forra is Paula on drums, Marta on vocals, Michelle on guitar, and Núria on bass.

MRR: How does Forra fit into the idea of punk as a form of oppositional culture? In 2019 is punk still a form of oppositional culture? What political potential—if any—remains? "El punk no es cultura" is a phrase that appears on the back of your record. I first saw this sentiment written on Cintas Pepe releases in the 2010s. What does it mean in the context of a Forra record? Why does the world need to be reminded of this now?

Paula: Forra is the strain and will to live; friends making noise. Punk is still ours in London, Mexico, Argentina or Spain. We have grown doing this and we have thrown up the purest things. Rage and happiness, all together. "El punk no es cultura" refers to Paco Mus. Thanks mate.

Marta: With Forra it was all about making a lot of noise since the first time, playing fast and having fun. We say what we think but we do not overthink what we do when we play. We don't have expectations and we don't want to like anyone. If you like it, that's cool, obviously.

Michelle: We got together because we wanted to get to know each other and have a good time being able to speak our mother language, there were never intentions to transcend. It is there and that moment of being together is the only thing that matters to us and for me that is punk. The fact that now, because of different situations of nationalities, it's hard for us to be together and that makes the time when we were together in a room pulling out the rage (also the laughs) and without knowing how to play well even more special.

Núria: When Paco came up with the idea to use that phrase in the record, we automatically agreed. A lot of punk/hardcore bands nowadays put a lot of effort into sounding "right", being out there, fitting, jumping into the mainstream and follow their values and rules. For us, punk, and this band, are about the opposite. We don't want to be part of anything, we don't care, we don't have any expectations, we don't give a shit about any scene basically. We do this because we are friends, we are upset and we love distorted noise.

MRR: You all come from different parts of the Spanish-speaking world: Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Argentina, Mexico. What brought you each to London? What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of being a part of the London punk scene as opposed to the cities that you previously lived in?

Paula: I came to London because of a lack of job opportunities in Tenerife. Six years later I love and hate this city that has me trapped. I'm thankful to be here where the money is, I can feel professionally fulfilled but I lack the essence and the character with which I grew up. For me, punk is my closest friends and the ways I have to relate to them. Unfortunately the idiosyncrasy of this city makes relationships not so frenetic. I miss that.

Marta: I came to London for the music and I stayed for the music, friends and lovers. I feel I still have a lot to explore in this part of the world. Thanks to the help of my friends, acquaintances and a lot of people in punk I feel the support to be able to fight to stay in a country that expels me and because of that same support I don't feel the isolation felt by other Latinxs or the most marginalized immigrants in English society. Punk supports the idea of no borders and the anti-system.

Michelle: I went for a year to study a masters degree in cinema with the help of a scholarship but my Londoner tale is over and I'm back in Mexico. For me was great that I met Paula and Núria when they came to play with Frau in DF, and now we share a friendship that I will always treasure. Thanks to Ash (from Frau) I was able to find a house quickly and thanks to Paco Forra has a record. And thanks to the network of friends in punk, from many different places, I felt very welcome in a city that can be very hostile.

Núria: What is a punk scene? Really. I don't know it anymore. I am only very grateful of having met good friends through common interests.

FOR RA

MRR: It has always been possible to create music across geographic distance, time and space, but many would say that the internet makes it that much easier. It seems hard to imagine a Forra created across wav files, though. Will you continue to collaborate now that you are spread further apart? I am motivated to play music because I like to commune and share space with my bandmates, because I like being reminded of the power of what my body can create in the company of other bodies. Why do you do it? What joys do you get from collaboration that cannot be experienced as an individual?

Paula: Forra was born in the best moment, without any kind of aspirations and it ended by the separation between us. We have never considered continuing. Maybe when Marta can come back from Argentina and when Michelle can come to visit. Without physical forras there is no Forra at all.

Marta: Definitely Forra is about us, our friendship and what happens when the four of us are together in a room. We could not do this in online mode.

Michelle: The only thing the Forras share through wav files are audios that look like podcasts of many minutes talking about our lives. Music only together and we all want to be together again as soon as possible, so something will happen at some moment.

Núria: I don't see Forra happening if we are not in the same city. My main reason of doing this band is to spend time with my friends, and if it happens, play some shit too.

MRR: Can you explain the significance of the word Forra? And for those readers who don't speak Spanish, can you explain some of your lyrical themes and the ideas that are being explored? I particularly love the lyrics to the song "Pantera."

Marta: The closest use of the word "Forra" in English would be the word "Cunt," as an adjective, not a noun. Meaning in Argentina it doesn't mean vagina but means sort of "bad person" but can be use in a friendly and joking way or as an insult. I like the idea of calling ourselves "cunts." The lyrics I'd say are very basic topics, such as the uncertainty of living in this era without any future plans, hatred for the police, or women who don't support other women. "Pantera" is about women being much stronger than we are portrayed to be. It's also about having a fun relationship with a man, from a position of being a strong woman, a relationship of equality, about not accepting any form of "domestication."

MRR: All proceeds from the record benefit the Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) a London based human rights, feminist organization run for Latin American women, and 100% run by Latin American women. Why did you choose this group?

Paula: Two of us are European immigrants with the right to live in the country (or who knows) and the other two are Latin American immigrants without the right to remain in it. Latin Americans Women's Rights Service helps a minority that is almost invisible in the UK. This organization has helped Marta when she needed it. These women do a great job assisting in what they can do for other women, from translation, psychotherapy, to legal assistance.

Marta: LAWRS is an incredible place where I found a lot of support, advice, and restraint in a moment where I felt lost and alone. As a Latin American it is difficult not to be able to access certain academic and social resources, but this place is exclusive for Latina women. You do not have to say your name, you ring the bell and they see you in the camera and they let you go up. They give you free and confidential advice. It's a very important place, an oasis in the middle of a city that can become very violent. The women of the organization are very happy with the record too!

Michelle: We are separated now by borders, even though we are privileged women in many ways. It's hard to see how these imaginary and violent lines destroy the lives of so many people. Forra hates borders so we loved the idea of Paco of being able to donate everything that comes out from *Mostrame lo Peor* to women who find themselves in these asphyxiating situations.

MRR: Do you prefer to practice or play live? Why?

Paula: I would prefer all forras lived closer and that nobody was illegal in order to do both.

Michelle: To me with being together is enough, both things had their charm. Without a doubt, the moments when we forgot the songs playing live for being drunk or simply because we were distracted were gold.

Núria: I don't prefer one thing before the other. I enjoy both for different reasons, I like to practice because during those two or three hours we have time to bond, share, fart, discuss, dance, cry, and make fucking noise without any limits. And then, I like to bring that vomit on stage and make everyone feel uncomfortable. Perfect combo.

MRR: Let's talk a little bit about music. When I listen to Forra I think about bands like Cocadictos, Otan, even Ohlo Seco. What music—new or old—excites you and why?

Michelle: Today I usually combine an old bachata by Ramón Torres, one of the melancholic songs of Roky Erickson, some dancing from The Sound or some salsa from Lavoe, a punk to feel accompanied by friends like Soga or Nekra and one to remember the grandparents from Benny Moré. The ties that I have to everything I listen to are different, but I feel that if something unifies the music that I like it is the honesty with which it is done without falling into pretensions.

Marta: I'm pretty square lately and mostly listen to techno. I think I like it the way I like punk, the whole attitude and speed of it, is is good to me how it gets my whole attention. One of my favs are also friends is this NY duo called Wetware. I also really like the classics like Void, I love it, especially the vocals and same with Japanese hardcore like Gauze or Shojoningyo. Like Michelle, I like listening to bands like Urin and Game which are bands I really like and miss seeing live.

I don't think we thought about how we wanted to sound, and also I got no idea what makes a band good! I guess is just what resonates with you and in my case what I find "legit" although that is always a subjective idea.

Núria: The music that nowadays makes me feel something is stuff that connects me, in some way, to the culture I grew up. Not genre specific. Lola Flores, Los Chikos del Maiz or Manel are "artists" that I have been playing repeatedly this past week, for example. Regarding punk, I always love to listen old Spanish bands and keep track, more or less, of projects that come out in the scenes I'm close / related to.

Paula: Long live salsa and reggaeton is what I have to say! I really like the street music that is being done in Spain and in Latin America now. There are many girls who do what they like and music as well. I want to be like Tomasa del Real or Ms Nina, I want to sing and sing like LaFavi. And move my ass like Lapili!

MRR: If Forra is no longer an active band, do you play in other groups or have other creative outlets? Do these fulfill the same or different parts of your life as Forra?

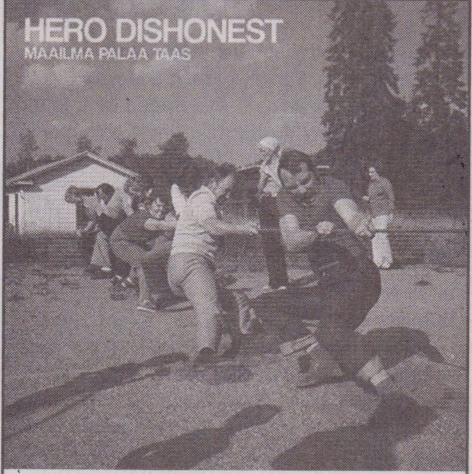
Michelle: I play in Secreto Público in Mexico City since before Forra. Playing in each of the bands I've had has been a very different experience. Forra is very special and could happen only at that moment—who knows when we will all meet again in the same place.

Núria: I also play in Terra Soror, something challenging as I play long songs that have more than threenotes.

Paula: I also play in Nekra, another band full of powerful women.

Marta: I'm not doing much at the moment but when I was in London I had some projects, one called Maladia more in the goth vein, a punk / techno / noise duo called CERDA; and a very folk pop one called Value Void. All of the projects are with people close to me; that's what they have in common. What makes Forra unique to me is the fuck all spirit that we all love. I really hope we can play some other time soon.

Listen to the Forra record at lavidaesunmus.bandcamp.com. Your purchase supports LAWRS.



HERO DISHONEST
MAAILMA PALAA TAAS LP

Raging 20-minute hardcore explosion from these Finnish veterans

Available in US from
stickfiguredistro.com
herodishonest.com

TRENDiSdEAD!
RECORDS

86'd RECORDS and DISTRO

OUT NOW
RATIONS NOISE / UNKNOWN RIVER DRIVER split LP/CS

STILL AVAILABLE
BOILERMAN LP/CD
GO WHITE BRONCO LP
BOILERMAN 7", 10"
FELLOW PROJECT CD

LAST COPIES
BOILERMAN 10"
UTTER FAILURE LP
DEAD UNCLES LP
RATIONS 7"

86DREC.COM

ENDLESS THANKS TO TIM YO, PAUL BARGER, ARWEN CURRY, MARTIN CRUDO, AND EVERYONE ELSE AT MRR WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO GO FROM READER, TO SUBSCRIBER, TO ADVERTISER, TO CONTRIBUTOR, TO COLUMNIST, AND TO THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN: SHITWORKER (FOR-A-DAY). EXCITED TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT. CHEERS FOR THE (M)EMO(R)(R)IES! - WELLS

FILLING TOMORROW'S LANDFILLS TODAY

FAKE NOOSE

RECESS RECORDS

IRON CHIC / TOYS THAT KILL
Split LP

CLOWN SOUNDS
Preacher Maker LP

FUTURE VIRGINS
Doomsday Raga LP

SACCHARINE TRUST
The Great One Is Dead 2xLP

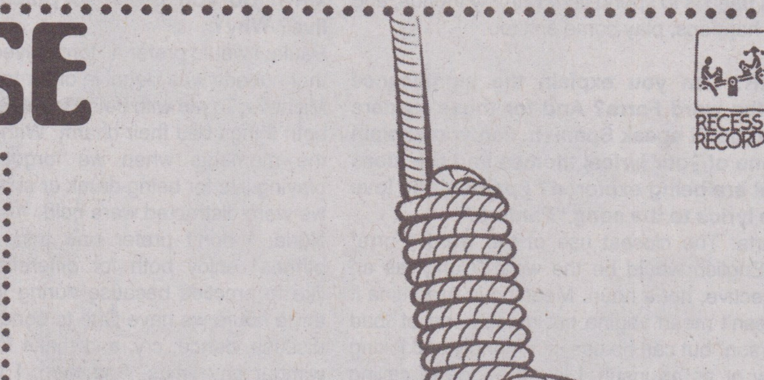
VACATION
Southern Grass Vol.1 & 2 LP's

PALE ANGELS
Daydreaming Blues LP

TOYS THAT KILL
Sentimental Ward LP/CD/CASS/DGTL, Fambly 42 LP

MEAT MARKET
Dig Deep LP/CS

(((DISTRO))) WWW.RECESSOPS.COM
(((SHOP))) WWW.RECESSRECORDS.COM
(((SNAIL))) POBOX 1666 SAN PEDRO,CA 90733
(((INSTANT))) RECESSRECORDS.BANDCAMP.COM



KHIIS

Interview by
Joan DeToro

Photos by
Myron Fung / Albert Licano

Khiis are my favorite band in Oakland, full stop. I enlisted in the Khiis Army the first time I witnessed their intense, at times almost psychedelic take on hardcore, and I feel lucky to call them friends. Despite all the time we've spent goofing around together, I never once thought about sitting down with them to chat about their history, what their songs are about, and what they hope to achieve. We sat down together in a car on a side street and joked and laughed until everything came spilling out.

→

MRR: First off, we need the basics: who are you, what do you do in the band, what your sun sign is, what other projects you played in, blah blah blah...

Kimia Haghighi: I'm 27, I do vocals, and I'm a Gemini / Taurus cusp, Gemini rising, Virgo moon. The first band I was in was the Flytraps, and then Birthday Girl, Y2K, and Primary. I also play in Super Unison sometimes.

Amanda Moore: I play bass, I'm an Aquarius. My other bands are not to be mentioned...they're history.

Ryan Greaves: I play drums. Aries sun, Sag moon, Cap rising. I also play in Vacant Heaven, and I played in Birthday Girl and Y2K.

Austin Montanari: I play guitar. I am a Leo sun and an Aquarius moon. I don't know what that means [laughter] but people say it makes sense. Some recent bands I've been in are Wild Moth, Fossor House, Primary, and then Kimia and I are working on a new project.

MRR: Three of you have played in bands together. How did Khiis come together? Was it through you all playing together or what?

Austin: It started with Ryan and me jamming.

Kimia: We [pointing towards Amanda] talked separately about doing our own thing.

Austin: Ryan and I had been trying to start our own project for a while, then we started working on music that sounded kind of like what Khiis sounds like. Then Kimia approached us about wanting to sing in a band.

Kimia: Me and Ryan had been in so many bands together, it's like every band I've been in has been with Ryan.

Ryan: So it just made sense...

Kimia: And Austin and I had started Primary at the same time...

Austin: And you'd been talking to Amanda too...

Kimia: Yeah, we actually didn't really know each other when we first started.

Amanda: You [Kimia] came over to listen to records and we just started talking about a style we were going for, and you were talking to one of these guys and found out that they wanted to do something similar to what we were doing.

Austin: I was actually shocked because I've been in so many bands where I play music with people and that is the only part of my life where I see them. But I feel like we get along really well.

Kimia: We all hang out with each other all the time. Kinda like my first band. It was right after high school, it was four girls, and we were best friends, and we would have slumber parties all the time. None of us had jobs, and two of us were in high school still, and our singer was fifteen. We'd play garage rock, go surfing, and go to LA to play shows.

Ryan: Not to the same degree, but when I started playing music in high school, it was usually with other people in town. We would jam for a little bit, then go out and skate some curbs, and just like eat food constantly.

Kimia: Being in a high school band is pretty fun friendwise, but your music probably sucks because you're in high school.

MRR: Wait, have you never sung in a band before?

Kimia: No, it's my first time. I karaoked for the first time a couple of years ago and I was like, "I have risen..."

Ryan: Kimia was on a different instrument in each of the last three bands we've played in—with Y2K it was guitar.

Kimia: Yeah yeah, playing guitar and bass it's easy, but with singing it's like "Oh my god, I want to try it."

MRR: It doesn't seem like it's your first time singing on stage.

Kimia: It's definitely my first. *[laughter]* Definitely a learning experience with a learning curve.

MRR: You were saying earlier that you were talking about wanting to go for a specific sound. What was your inspiration? Were you trying to sound like one band, or were you just trying to do a hardcore band?

Amanda: When me and Kimia met up we were listening to a lot of Destino Final-type stuff.

Ryan: The only band tattoo I have is a Destino Final tattoo. The stuff Austin and I were writing towards the beginning was hardcore but it wasn't quite as ripping. It was a bit more stripped down, and it wasn't quite as D-beat. It was a bit more hardcore in comparison to hardcore punk.

Kimia: We listen to a lot of stuff. Destino Final is just so out there, which was the aspect of it that Austin seems drawn to, like the psychedelic parts of it. But we listen to Scandi stuff too, like ripping music. I was thinking about Bluttat for the vocals, like [makes noises with her mouth].

Austin: What were we going for in the beginning?

Ryan: It was hardcore that was hard hitting that wasn't jock-y hardcore. Some of the stuff that we were working on was more mid-tempo.

Kimia: I never listen to bands to get a sound because it's never going to sound just like that.

Austin: And then when we started the band Kimia said she wanted to sing in Farsi for it.

Kimia: I thought it would be fun and a way to force me to get into the habit of using it.

MRR: You don't use Farsi on a regular basis?

Kimia: No, not really. It was my first language, but I've forgotten a lot of it. But it's one of those things where you are like, "Oh, what is this called? Oh yeah, this."

MRR: Was there anything else that y'all agreed on at the get-go? Like a philosophy or an approach that you all agreed on for playing in a band?

Ryan: Kimia and I both learned a lot from the last few bands we were in. In this band I really wanted to have a rule where if anyone doesn't want to do anything for any reason then we just don't do it. We only proactively do things that we want to do. We don't want to turn it into an obligation.

Kimia: Opt in, not opt out.

Ryan: Exactly. We don't want to be voting people or anything like that, it's more like let's try to find a direction that we all feel really good about moving in for every decision we make.

Amanda: We also do our best to play all ages shows. We understand that sometimes shows have to happen in bars, but we prefer not to do that.

Austin: We all value DIY spaces, but it's gotten harder and harder to find them. Amanda's been on top of booking shows.

Amanda: I try to book shows, find venues...My partner John and I will just wander around looking for places that could be venues.

Kimia: My main thing was just never feeling pressured, like at practice being like "you're not focused, you've got to focus." This is my free time, I do this because it's fun and because I want to hang out with my friends.

Amanda: There's no obligation, we come because we want to.

Austin: We get more excited about the stuff we write when we're all actually wanting to show up to practice.

Kimia: It's obvious when bands are friends because they're having fun and it makes everything more fun.

Ryan: It's a contagious feeling! You can be proficient but if you're bummed then sorry, that's just not doing it for me. Having a band, there is work that will come up, but it offers an opportunity to be outside of your job where someone else is setting up all of the expectations of your dynamic. Like, how do I want to work with other people? Having an example in your life that you can follow elsewhere and know that you can do work in another way because you're doing it...there's lessons from this band that bleed out into other parts of my life.

MRR: Do you have any shared political beliefs?

Amanda: Pretty much all of them.

Kimia: A lot of our conversations at band practice are about stuff that's happening.

Amanda: Scene politics.

Kimia: Not just scene politics. Even with the Muslim ban stuff I was having a lot of feels. During all of that, for a lot of Middle Eastern folks, it was scary and it was sort of like 9/11 flashbacks in a way. We talked about it at practice. We talked about postponing tour in case I needed to go visit family in Iran. My family can never come over here now. There are often situations around us that we feel strongly about and need to talk out. Doing vocals is sick because you get to write out your feelings. When we have intense feelings about what's going on in the world or in the immediate scene, we all talk it out. How do we deal with this? What's the way to be on the right side of what's happening?

Ryan: Just like people do with their closest friends. I've learned so much from all of the people in this band...that's why they're my closest friends, that's what I want.

Kimia: Shared political views and the fact that we all support each other when there's things that we stand for. You have to be political to be punk, you know? Being anti-capitalist and caring for folks that have less in the world, caring when bad things happen to people in different parts of the world. And in your own scene too. Creating your own space that is an idealized version of the world that you'd like to live in, you know?

MRR: Let's talk more about the Muslim travel ban because you talked about writing your feelings about it through your lyrics, which I'm assuming may be one of the ones you sing in Farsi?

Kimia: I didn't write songs specifically about that. Well, I did write ones that are specifically about more Middle Eastern stuff. There's one that's about growing up Persian, or half, and having everyone watch you and constricting you a little bit, like "don't look at me, stop staring at me." That's one that I did in Farsi. There's some more tongue-in-cheek ones. With the lyrics, keeping them light is fun because I wanted to highlight the more fun aspects of being Middle Eastern. There's a lot of cool shit about being Middle Eastern that people don't get to see. The art, a lot of the history, the mythology, reading Omar Khayyam as a kid, you know, growing up with a lot of history and tradition. I wanted to bring the fun and weird cultural things up too. Some songs are more frustrated, like when you see members of your family or community having their lives affected by racist policies, but others are also about how great it is to grow up Middle Eastern.

MRR: I remember once we were talking about your lyrics and you talked about being inspired by myth and fairy tales.

Kimia: Yeah, fairytales are a thing in Persian culture, they have a lot of fairies in Persian myths. I was watching a lot of Persian films, and there was this one, The White Meadow, it's an arthouse film with a lot of metaphors but very visual. One of them is that there's this guy that's collecting tears from people and he goes to all these places and enters situations to collect tears in a jar. Growing up Persian, there's a lot of conversations that you have...I remember my dad telling me life lesson type stuff. He would give me these lessons in Farsi and then he would tell me the translation of what it means and it's opaque but it's like "you don't ditch your garden because you see a fox in it" or something. Having the art revolve more about folktales and lore and expressions were important to me. Having that form of art being passed on for thousands of years, in so many ways, they're so important.

MRR: Let's talk more about the art because it consistently stands out from pretty much every hardcore band that I've seen. Who is the artist and how did you come across them?

Amanda: It's Jihwan from Scumraid. He lives in South Korea. I met him when Scumraid played Manic Relapse three or four years ago. He's a funny ass character. We were driving around and he was like "I've never been here before," so we decided to take him to the Golden Gate Bridge. So we're driving and there's all this traffic and it's hard to get to and he suddenly says he's been there before many times. So we were like, "Why are we taking you there?" And then he says "...in Grand Theft Auto!" *[laughter]* After that point he started tattooing and I saw his artwork around a lot. It was something we all agreed on as something that we wanted to do.

Austin: We love his art. For the demo, Kimia sent him a poem to work off.

Kimia: The poem from "Sahar."

Austin: And then gave some visual precedents, some images she had.

MRR: What were the images that you sent his way?

Kimia: There's a couple of different birds. The first one is from "Sahar." It's a poem about this person who gets lost in the desert. It's really cold

and a starless night and then the light of the dawn bird reminds him that the sun will soon come and warm him up. And then there's morgh-e sahar, which is from this old Persian poem. The bird of light is a symbol of bringing an end to the night or to oppression. There's a lot of different birds in Middle Eastern and Iranian history, but it was a mixture of those two birds that inspired Jihwan's piece. And then there's other elements like the snake in a box, which was kind of coincidental. There's a bird in the cage too, right? But because of that snake, for the second one we decided to use Zahhak, who's this really evil serpent king. The cover of the EP is more angry looking, as opposed to the more fun and light-hearted demo. It's a good versus evil theme that comes up a lot in like Shahnameh and stories of Rostam and Div-e sepid.
Ryan: As bad as it gets. *[laughter]*
Kimia: The art for the second record is Zahhak. Zahhak is this really evil ruler who grew snakes out of his shoulders and would execute people to feed their brains to the snakes. But he was really sharp and people liked him a lot at first because he was really witty and he tricked people into thinking that he was good.

MRR: When did the band start?
Austin: Our first show was with Unarm and Subversive Rite in June or July 2017.
Kimia: And then for about six months before that we were getting together and conceptualizing stuff.
Ryan: It was October of 2016.
Kimia: Once the writing started happening it just went boom, boom, boom, boom.
Austin: Amanda and Ryan went out of town shortly after our first show and then we went on our first tour not long after that. That's when we played our third, fourth, and fifth show.
Amanda: We only did two shows before that tour??

MRR: So you got everything together really quickly. You went on tour immediately...
Kimia: It was Amanda.

MRR: And you got your tape put out...
Kimia: That was Amanda. All of that was Amanda.

MRR: *[to Amanda]* You're the networker of the band?
Kimia: She's the organized one that's good at...
Amanda: I'm just neurotic.

MRR: You got the demo pretty much immediately released by Runstate. How did that happen?
Amanda: We self-released the tapes and then Runstate picked them up because my last band, that shall not be named, was also on Runstate. Then Hafiz from Sial told Pissed Off Records about us and they hit us up to split release our tape with Bullwhip Records. And then Skell released our EP for our East Coast tour that we did later. Also, Discos Enfermos hit us up and put our demo out on a flexi in Spain.

MRR: The EP got released really quickly after the demo.
Austin: We sent all of our first recordings to Distort Reality, and they told us they were interested in putting out the 7".
Ryan: Part of what made things go so quick is that our demo and EP were part of the same session. We hoarded a batch of songs and separated them into what we wanted the demo to be and what we wanted the EP to be.
Amanda: And it's funny because a handful of people have come up to me and told me things like, "Damn, the EP, it is crazy how different it is from the demo, it is so good! The demo is good but this is on a different level! You're getting better and better!"
Kimia: False. We had it done for so long. We never had a 7" release show because those songs were like a year and a half old!
Amanda: And Shayne from Krimewatch has a new distro called Teeny Tiny Records and they did a comp called Fresh Volume One and we did a special song on that one that was recorded with Eric Urbach. But the other stuff was all recorded with Greg at Earhammer.

MRR: What are you working on right now?
Amanda: We just recorded and mastered an LP.
Kimia: In September! *[laughter]*
Austin: It's fucked up how by the time music comes out it's already so old.
Ryan: It's like a year wait every time.
Kimia: When they invent a way to mind-send music to people we'll be ready.
Austin: We recorded ten songs.
Amanda: And we're saving one so it's going to be a nine song LP released by La Vida Es Un Mus for our European tour which is going to be in June.

MRR: You've been in punk for a long time now. What keeps you in punk in 2019?
Amanda: Literally no fucking clue. *[laughter]*
Ryan: I don't know if this is punk specifically or playing music in general, but I feel that this is one of my favorite ways of getting to know anyone. Seeing someone regularly and creating something together and logging hours is my favorite way to get close. It's such a fun process. What better way to do it than over some ripping tunes, right? I just wanna rip with other people.
Kimia: I'm just glad that I have it because I see folks that don't have anything like it and I want to know where they make friends, where they see people... And it's a place that feels safe in a lot of ways because the outside world is a scary place and when you have a community that at least tries most of the time to do the right thing and see some of the justice that you're not going to see anywhere else. If something fucked up happens to you, what happens? Do you call the cops? That's not going to do anything. In punk there's some sort of accountability of process of being heard. And also doing something that feels good...a lot of punks are people that do a lot of work for the community at large and have radical ideas that I mostly agree with. I never have to interact with someone that's like a Republican. With most people, we disagree on the finer points sometimes but with a lot of people it's like a vetting process of knowing someone that's not going to be a complete fucking asshole.
Amanda: And also being able to travel and go places and see people and having that connection. Like "Oh cool, we might not speak the same language but we can communicate and know we're into similar things."
Kimia: And a lot of times when you're young and first going to shows, you collect music and get into different stuff. I used to pore over all these websites just reading and learning about past punk and scenes all over the world. I'm obsessed! You're not going to just stop. That's all I'm going to listen to anyway. It's accessible, I'm not going to just listen to pop music that's on the radio. You're never going to meet the people that are making that music that you like and care about. With punk there's no rock star celebrity bullshit. You can sit down with a person whose art you enjoy and have a conversation with them about it.

MRR: Anything else I missed?
Kimia: My friend Lili lives in New York and is an amazing artist. We had her draw a flyer for our East Coast tour, and she drew the artwork we have of the lady. I found out about her because Nader from Haram showed me her art and asked if I met her, she's Persian. And I was like "This is so cool!" She did this a really cool zine of Shahnameh. I love her art so much

because it looks like the paintings that I had in my house that are from Iran. I asked her to do some art and it was everything I ever imagined. It was so cool and so Persian. And me and Lili are in a DM group with a ton of other Persian punks. It's called Shahs of Punk. Literally so many of the Persian punks are in it, it's tight. It's awesome, because we're able to have both light-hearted and more serious conversations, and we're able to really relate to each other a lot—we've had lots of similar experiences.

Pick up Khiis' debut album on their tour or at a sick punk distro near you.

KHIIS EUROPEAN TOUR

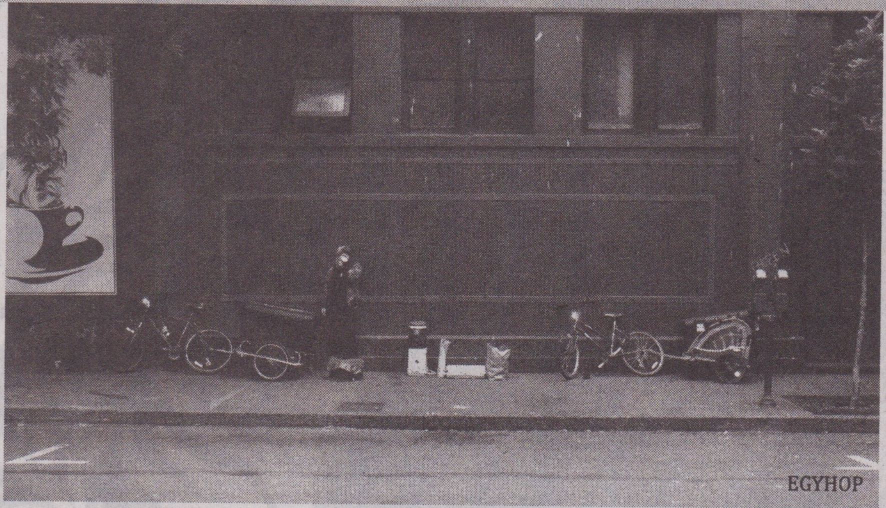
2019

khiis.bandcamp.com

INTERFAITH WORKS

Emergency Overnight Shelter

INTERFAITH WORKS EMERGENCY OVERNIGHT SHELTER is a homeless shelter in Olympia, WA, employing a bunch of punks who believe in harm reduction, mutual aid, and low-barrier sheltering. Born out of the Emma Goldman Youth and Homeless Outreach Project (EGYHOP), a bicycle powered mobile syringe exchange and outreach project here, it was started by Meg Martin of Dogjaw and Razzmtazz, Jeff Doyle of Sharkpact and Hail Seizures, and Cassie Burke of Hen's Teeth. This interview is with founder Meg Martin.


EGYHOP

Interview and introduction by Jack Connors. Photos by Baby Max Baer.

MRR: How did you first get involved in harm reduction?
Meg Martin: Looking back, I've seen the world from the lens of harm reduction for most of my life, but I never knew that vocabulary. I officially got involved in the harm reduction movement in early 2008 as an outreach worker for EGYHOP. I got trained on the exchange and it was a life changer for me. I had just gotten out of an abstinence-based rehab program after a chaotic run with dope that had been really unsafe, with lots of sharing rigs and other things I didn't even know were really high risk until I got trained with EGYHOP. There were a lot of messages from rehab that didn't sit well with me, but there were some that did make sense, and when I found EGYHOP, a lot of those ideas came into sync in a new way for me, philosophically.

MRR: When did you see a need for a low-barrier shelter in Olympia? Was there a specific moment?
I first started noticing the need before I had the vocabulary for it. The need was clear doing outreach each week for many years and seeing the same vulnerable people on the streets night after night, cheating death by some fucking miracle. You can't help but wonder, "Where is their safety net? How is this the world that we live in?" I think that the moment came later in the story, for me at least. It was in a city council meeting, and Cassie, Jeff, and I had been going for a few weeks to tell the city that passing the camping ban and the sit/lie and aggressive panhandling ordinances were bullshit and they needed to open a low-barrier shelter because as government they have a responsibility to care for those in humanitarian crises. Well, after a few weeks of blank stares and "who are you?"s and "you're just Evergreen students who will be gone in two years," we had this moment where it felt like no one was going to do this if we didn't. And that's when our focus shifted.

MRR: Why did you want to start IWEOS?
Honestly, I don't think we ever really wanted to. That sounds bananas but it's kind of true, at least for me. What I really wanted was for our community to care about people on the streets enough to believe that they deserved to have their basic needs met and then make a plan around that. It seemed pretty basic to me. We all have a responsibility to care for each other, especially those of us who are having a harder time. Turns out that's not how the world works. That's when we realized that no one was going to care in a way that sparked any real action unless we kept pushing it.

Staff member Jeanne

We started showing up to City Hall in November 2012, but the real push to get things rolling started in early 2013. After a one (hellish) year run, trying and failing to open the shelter in multiple locations across the city where neighbors made it very clear they didn't want a shelter in their backyard, we finally opened the doors of the nightly shelter on November 1, 2014. We now have the 42-bed nightly shelter, the Community Care Center (CCC) day room and hygiene center with on-site support services in partnership with the local hospital and about sixteen other local service providers, and a peer support advocacy team that provides goal-oriented case management called the Navigation Team.

MRR: What exactly is a low-barrier shelter?

This is a really important question because as the Housing First and Harm Reduction movements continue to grow and become more mainstream, there is a huge risk that the integrity of the models will be compromised, making room for posers to have the vocabulary but not the commitment to actually doing the work that it takes to support people in a low-barrier way. For us, low-barrier means asking people what makes it hard to access services and then not doing any of that stuff. What that translates to is that our shelter allows pets of all kinds, we allow couples to stay together, we don't have length-of-stay limits, we don't require sobriety and encourage people to talk openly about their drug use and the possible risks they are facing, we offer but don't require people to engage in mental health or case management or anything else in order to stay with us, we don't push any faith or morality on people, we let people leave their personal belongings inside within specific limits, we don't require ID or legal names if people don't want to give them, we try to be as LGBTQ+ inclusive as possible which is not the norm for the adult sheltering system, and we try to make our space as safe as possible for POC, LGBTQ+, differently abled bodies and minds, etc.

MRR: Do you feel that there are any shortcomings with the low-barrier sheltering model?

Yeah, I do. I think that there is no perfect way to run a shelter or drop-in day center because humans aren't meant to live that way. Sometimes it feels very difficult to remain low-barrier and allow people to work through their unique crises organically without ostracization, yet be trauma-informed at the same time. To do this requires transparent boundary setting, consistency, and maintaining a predictable environment which is difficult in a low-barrier shelter that tries its best not to kick people out. We provide services to guests and employ staff who are often highly traumatized, resilient people, and it can be difficult to navigate through those nuances together. We do our best to make our programs safe and supportive for everyone. We succeed sometimes and we fail a lot.

MRR: Strengths?

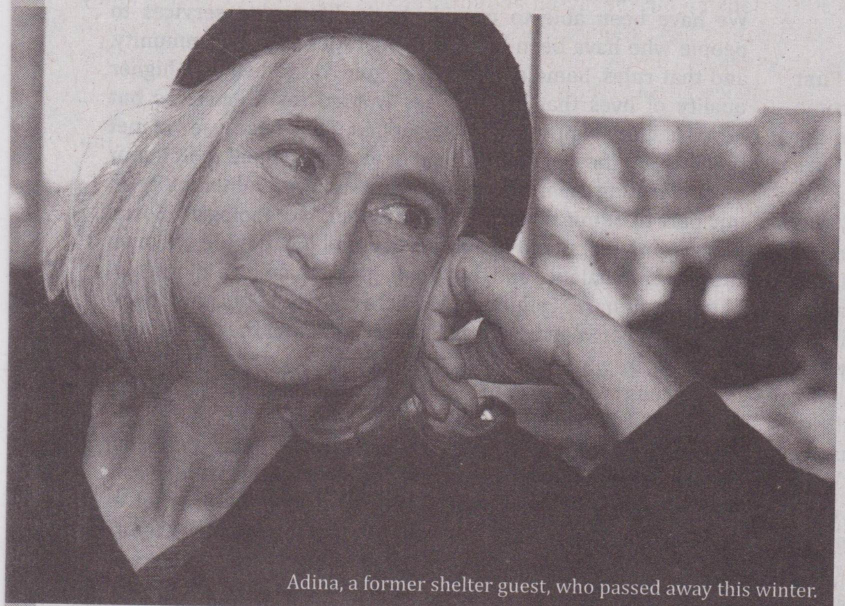
We have been able to provide basic, life-saving services to people who have been left out for decades in our community, and that rules. Some of them have gone on to live way higher quality of lives that they always wanted for themselves but never had the support to make happen. That's because we met them where they were at instead of expecting them to fit in our boxes. Meeting them where they are at requires vulnerability on our part to admit when we've fucked up and apologize. Social service providers tend to suck at that and just double down on the power imbalance and that's something that I love about low-barrier and harm reduction. We actively talk about the power imbalance between us as paid, housed staff and the people who are living at our shelter or utilizing our day center to get their basic needs met. We try to take responsibility for that and admit when we've blown it.

Another strength is that our managerial team and staff challenge me as the director, and the structures that we work within regularly. They are amazing advocates for themselves and have pushed me and our board to be more inclusive, more in-line with our core values, challenge racism, transphobia, and sexism that happens regularly, and not roll over and accept that the system we are working within is a piece of shit so we shouldn't even try to be better within it. We have tried to be better within it, and I am forever grateful to the managers and staff team for having "courageous conversations"(™ BDW), particularly our Trans and POC caucuses, who have stepped up during difficult situations to advocate for themselves. We also laugh a lot, cry a lot, and feel the huge spectrum of messy feelings that comes from this type of support work.

MRR: What is the process like to start a shelter? Did you experience a lot of pushback from the city? From residents?

The process for us might not be the process for every community, but elements of it are the same. The process for us was/still is like this:

- We saw a gap in services—people we loved were on the streets night after night, yet there were open shelter beds at the local faith-based shelter.
- We asked people on the street why they weren't going inside—we did a handwritten flyer survey about why people weren't accessing shelter.
- We did research on best practices and highest standards to start creating the bones of a program.
- We advocated at City Hall every week for what we wanted—this meant going way outside of our comfort zones and learning how to become shapeshifters and listen to people who said terrible, terrible things about people we loved all the time.
- We listened to the advice we got from elected officials even if we didn't agree. The most important advice was to partner with a more established organization with broader community appeal. This is how we came under the umbrella of Interfaith Works.
- We did a bunch of community education: like public speaking at every community group and church we could think of, tabling all over town, a poster and button campaign "Ask me about the People's House." Today we have a button that says "Ask me why I support IW Homeless Services." Benefit shows, letters to the editor, blog writing, social media, etc.
- We didn't give up even when we got told "no," or "you're too politically risky of a group," or "you need to change your model," or "you need to hire professionals to do this for you," or "why don't you work for an existing agency who's already got support?" over and over and over and over. It was fucking exhausting and we kept with it. Just like in street outreach work, one of the most important things we did was continue to show up and build unlikely relationships.
- We maintained an anchor of our core values when we were continuously asked to compromise in so many ways.



Adina, a former shelter guest, who passed away this winter.

MRR: Seems like you made some interesting allies on your way to starting the shelter and even now that the shelter is established. What are some of those partnerships and what do they look like?

I think the partnership that surprised us the most was the faith community link. Cassie, Jeff, and I used to talk all the time about how fucked up it was that all the services that were available for food and shelter for single adults were overtly Christian. We were very against trying to start anything that could be construed as religiously motivated in any way. But as we started to learn more about the history of the faith communities of Interfaith Works and how they had just been quietly kicking ass for 25 years providing entirely volunteer-run shelters in their church basements and social halls while we were sitting around complaining about how much Christians sucked, we were like, "Oh damn, these church ladies are extremely legit." Today the partnerships are far and wide—local government, healthcare, small businesses, neighborhood associations, first responders, law enforcement. There's no part of our local ecosystem that isn't in some way affected by houselessness and I figured that if we want the best shot at making life suck less for our people, then we better figure out how to influence all the parts of society that interact with people experiencing homelessness. It often feels like the biggest uphill battle that will inevitably crush us, but when I zoom out it is undeniable that our community has completely shifted its view on how we should be organizing support to people who need it the most. It is undeniable that harm reduction practices, low-barrier shelter, and housing first are the orientation of our homeless response, healthcare, community mental health system, and now our substance use treatment system (albeit very slowly) as well. That shift in perspective is by no means only ours to claim and we have benefited *enormously* from the tireless work of those who have come before us, but I think that we brought a visibility to the issue in a way that hadn't happened before and we created a road map in our community that other systems and agencies could look to for guidance. We have also learned how to speak the language of politicians and business people and how to share data (occupancy numbers, demographic information, overall community impact) in a way that is not exploitative of our guests and shows our "successes" over and over and over to help make the case of why giving a shit about people also saves money. If you don't care about people that obviously sucks, but if you care about money, this way of doing things also makes sense. So we talk about it both ways while remaining anchored to our core value of unconditional respect.

MRR: What's been the biggest challenge with these partnerships and with starting a shelter?

For me the biggest challenge has been to integrate our vibe, style, and the unique ace in our pocket—for the most part people on the street trust us—into an overbearing and years-old system based on charitable giving that assumes that people are morally deficient because they are poor. Organizationally we are in a ongoing state of re-explaining why we do things the way that we do and why it is more effective, efficient, humane, etc. It gets exhausting to have to constantly remind our community that our shelter and CCC guests deserve to have a higher quality of life simply because they are human, not because they should have to do something to earn it.

MRR: How do other service providers and shelters in Olympia respond to IWEOS?

For the most part really, really well. Especially at this point. It wasn't always that way though. When we were

first on the scene trying to open as the People's House, there was a lot of unrest from some other service providers who thought that we were threatening their way of doing business, that we were shit talking kids who didn't know what we were talking about, that we were being too politically challenging, and that we needed to "rebrand" so that we would be more palatable and less threatening.

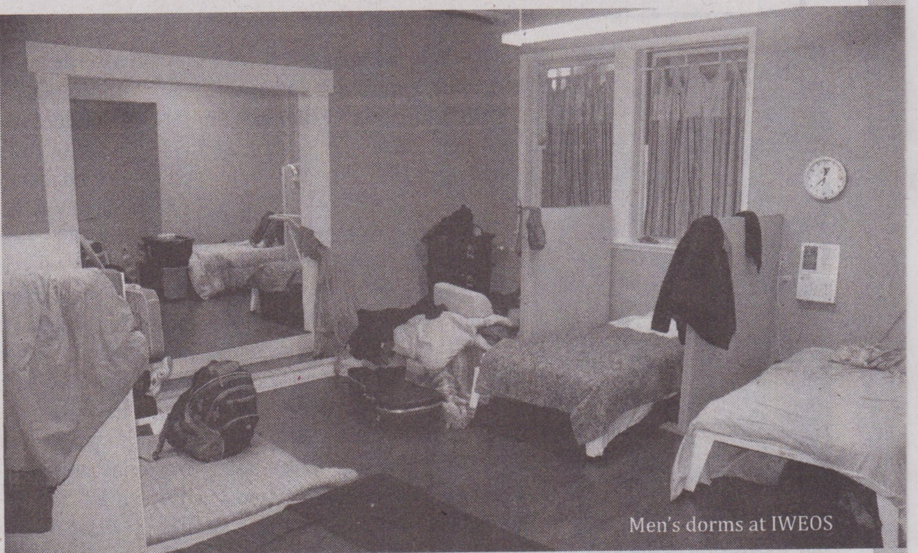
MRR: Do you feel like the response towards homelessness from the city and residents of Olympia has changed at all since IWEOS came around? Do you feel that IWEOS played a role in that?

Definitely, yes. Although, I will say we've been around long enough to see the ebbs and flows of minds changing, and then slipping back into old patterns. Right now our community is experiencing what I believe to be broad-based compassion fatigue. What we all know from doing support work is that a primary indicators of burnout are rigidity and power struggles, hopelessness, judgement, hypervigilance or disassociation, and internal messages that people are "manipulative" or "taking advantage of our kindness," or whatever else coded language, that are rarely conscious thoughts, that just means that they are morally deficient and don't deserve our help unless they do something to earn it. I see this attitude happening in our community right now, so it feels like we have slipped back in time a little bit, but in the end that lie doesn't live up to scrutiny. We will do another push of community education, keep doing free workshops and volunteer trainings each month in an effort to provide perspective and try to change minds. Fighting stigma is ongoing internal and external work that isn't linear with a start or stop.

But again, if I zoom out, terms and practices like low-barrier, harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and vulnerability-based placement (rather than first come/first served) are all part of the daily lexicon, even within the overtly religious shelters, the city/county response to homelessness, the police response, and other social service partners. I think that also speaks to the larger movement nationwide gaining more mainstream cred, which doesn't directly involve us, but locally we for sure had a big influence on the shift. Funding priority language, performance measure requirements, grant application requirements, etc. have all shifted towards a more supportive and harm reduction-based lens since 2014 in Thurston County, which ultimately means more access for the people who need it the most.

MRR: What are some challenges your organization faces today?

Today I'm stressed about money all the time and that feels like shit. I want to pay our staff more, many of whom come from lived experience, minimal work history, are marginalized in really intense ways, and have dedicated themselves to this work for many years. I want to have a safer, cleaner building for the shelter, I want to figure out how to build permanent housing because our guests are just going to keep dying in shelter until we do, I want to make it even easier for our people to be comfortable and get the love and support they deserve. But the bigger the organization gets, the more compromises you make to accommodate the growth. At the same time, we started all of this in a basement of a 110 year old church with plumbing that goes uphill so we also can't stay where we are that much longer either. It's very hard to grow as fast as we have and maintain the core values, deep connection, and the DIY spirit that we founded this program on. The other thing that is cheesy but really really real is that the longer we do this, the harder it is to maintain hope in a lot of ways. Also, it feels like the vibe of younger punks and people who may be interested in support work is coming from a perspective that everything is fucked, so fuck it! I'm looking out for myself and my friends rather than engaging in my broader community, more than even four years ago when we opened. But it could also be that I'm old and boring and complain about "the youth" now? Or maybe the widespread hopelessness is Trump's fault too?


Men's dorms at IWEOS

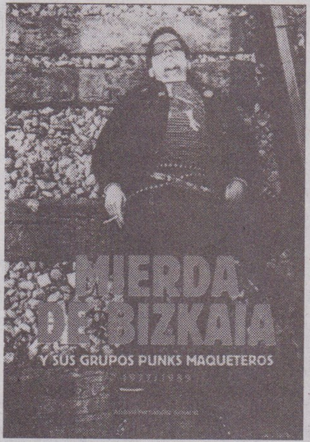
MRR: You're real busy. How do you manage your time between your work and your friends and still stick to your politics?

Well, it's hard. My life looks really different than it did five years ago. I don't ever really know what it means to have that all in balance. Has my life ever been in balance? I'm always trying to get to that place but I've never been there before and don't really know what it would look like if I got there. I know that I love my friends far and wide (I miss so many of you who might be reading this), I love my family and want to help my nephew and nieces continue to be awesome people as they get older, I love playing music and never want to stop doing that even if I only practice a few times a month and feel like a poser, I try not to party too much but I like to party hard sometimes, and I try to do new creative stuff like collaging, sewing projects, and zine making. Most of all, I want to be someone who lives out my core values through the work that I do, in my relationships, and within myself. That balance for me lately has been to remind myself of all the stuff I remind everyone else about everyday. Have I done the basics today: water, food, shower, deep breathing? I struggle hard sometimes and I'm not always the person I want to be and that doesn't mean that I should die. It's OK to tell people that I'm struggling even if they don't know what to say and it feels awkward. Am I being honest with the people I love the most even if it's painful? I'm not a piece of shit, I do deserve love, the world is actually really beautiful, and I should lift my head up every once in a while and look at the tall trees.

Learn more and support at iwshelter.org.

BOOKS

We are always looking for independently-published books to review.
Send a copy to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA.
Write to books@maximumrocknroll.com with any questions.



Mierda de Bizkaia
Andoni Fernández Azkarai
DDT Liburuak / Ediciones Sin Gluten, 2018
410 pgs | 15€

«Dicen que el tiempo pone a cada uno en su sitio, pero igualmente podemos pensar que el tiempo es un tanto canalla y que en esta vida rara vez se hace justicia.»
—Andoni Fernández Azkarai, autor de *Mierda de Bizkaia*.

Bizkaia, mierda, rock'n'roll. Con un punto de partida limitado *Mierda de Bizkaia* es, sin embargo, un ejemplo de historia social que va más allá. Es historia desde los márgenes de la sociedad, narrada por aquellas voces rechazadas por el discurso oficial triunfante. Voces disonantes con el relato engañoso que se estaba formando. Voces desafinadas y afónicas también, pues gritaron y pelearon por existir bajo sus propias normas. Sin normas. Sus protagonistas se dejaron la piel y aquellos que sobrevivieron alzan la voz de nuevo para expresar su verdad.

A estas alturas Eskorbuto, Vulpess o MCD son bandas conocidas allí donde hay punks, en todo el mundo. No son éstas las protagonistas de *Mierda de Bizkaia*. Están presentes, pero en boca de otras desconocidas. Aquí hablan las olvidadas. Aquellas bandas que vivieron el surgimiento del punk en Euskadi pero no llegaron a producir un vinilo. Algunas ni siquiera una maqueta.

No esperéis nuevos ídolos que adorar. Yo he odiado a más de uno de los personajes que habitan estas páginas. Da igual. Todos ellos forman una historia conjunta, contradictoria, cruda, honesta y apasionante. Nos confían su intimidad y muestran el retrato de una generación en conflicto contra todo.

Bizkaia es una de las tres provincias oficiales de Euskadi (no entraremos aquí demasiado en la cuestión nacional), en el norte del opresivo estado español. En los años de explosión del punk es una región castigada por el paro y la crisis económica. Experimenta, como el resto del territorio español, una lenta mutación de sistema político tras la dictadura fascista, sacudida por un fuerte movimiento obrero y la actividad armada de ETA y Comandos Autónomos Anticapitalistas.

Es impensable que el punk, nacido del rechazo, se mantenga al margen de las tensiones sociales del momento. Más aún cuando las fuerzas del orden acostumbran a cachear aleatoriamente, detener, golpear y robar a los jóvenes punks. Eran la gran mayoría de ellos de clase obrera luchadora. Gente que sufría en sus barrios y sus familias el acecho de la crisis y la explotación. Manu, del grupo NPI, deja claro porqué había tanto punk en su ciudad: «Eskorbuto lo dijo en tres palabras: paro, miseria y humillación.»

Los primeros punks vascos no pueden viajar a Londres el fin de semana, no van a fiestas de la alta sociedad. Desprecian la movida madrileña. Ellos montan sus equipos con piezas robadas, autoconstruidas o improvisadas. «Mira, nosotros íbamos a las cabinas telefónicas, reventábamos el telefonillo y nos cogíamos los altavoces. Esos se los poníamos a las guitarras españolas y con dos cables lo enchufábamos al radiocasete que le pillaba a mi hermano mayor. Subíamos el volumen a tope y distorsionaba la guitarra.» (Javi, de Kiskillas Farrangosas)

De su vida cotidiana nacía un espíritu rebelde incontrolable. «Entusiasmo y las ganas de cambiar. Nosotros quisimos hacer la revolución aunque no teníamos ni idea de qué era la revolución. Nosotros sólo la vivíamos y la sentíamos.» (Aitor, de Deserción). Una entrevista tras otra se nos desvela la cara oculta de los años ochenta. Casi no hay rastro de la esperanza pasada, el futuro no existía pero el presente se vivía intensamente. Guerra sucia, drogas, violencia, machismo, las primeras okupas, insumisión, lucha política, creatividad...todo se mezcla.

Hay peleas pero también hay mucho apoyo. Los mayores enseñando a tocar a los jóvenes y haciéndoles un hueco. La necesidad de unirse para okupar un espacio y hacérselo propio, llevarlo adelante, enfrentarse a la policía, a los fascistas y a la clase política. Curiosamente, la mayoría de las personas entrevistadas consideran el momento actual peor que entonces y con un futuro más incierto.

¿Qué nos dejó todo aquello? Nos dejó su voz y una cultura creada a golpes y pedazos. Una cultura que agoniza si no se reinventa, si no se nutre con la aportación de cada una de nosotras. Éste es un trabajo fascinante y Andoni lo ha realizado con sus propios medios, por la pura pasión de descubrir y dar a conocer el punk marginal de Bizkaia. Además, nos brinda la oportunidad de deleitar y destruir nuestros oídos en mierdadebizkaia.bandcamp.com con grabaciones rescatadas de muchas de las bandas entrevistadas. Pero no sólo eso, *Mierda de Bizkaia* ha animado a otras personas a recuperar la historia de sus respectivas regiones. Y eso nos alegra profundamente. Gipuzkoa será la siguiente. Eskerrik asko.

—Hèctor

"They say that time puts everyone in their place, but it's just as true that time is a cruel bastard, and in this life justice is rarely served."
—Andoni Fernández Azkarai, author of *Mierda de Bizkaia*.

Bizkaia, shit, rock'n'roll. Despite its small starting point, *Mierda de Bizkaia* is a social history that goes further. It's history from the margins, narrated by voices rejected by mainstream discourse. Voices that dissent from the deceitful history that was being written at the time. Hoarse, off-pitch voices that screamed and fought to exist on their own terms, or without any terms. Its protagonists fought with everything they had, and those that survived are raising their voices again to express their truth.

These days, Eskorbuto, Vulpess, and MCD are well-known groups in every punk scene on Earth. But those aren't the protagonists of *Mierda*

de Bizkaia. They appear, but in tales told by nobodies. In this book, the nobodies, the forgotten, are the speakers: bands that lived during the punk boom in Euskadi but never managed to stamp their existence onto vinyl. Some of them didn't even record a demo.

Don't hope for any new idols here. I hated more than one of the characters who lived in these pages. Doesn't matter. All of them make up a shared history, contradictory, crude, honest, and impassioned. They confide in us, and together they make up a portrait of a generation in conflict with everything.

Bizkaia is one of the three official provinces of Euskadi (we won't get too deep into the Euskadi nationalism question here), in the northern part of the oppressive Spanish state. At the end of the 1970's it was in the midst of an economic crisis, and that's when punk blew up. Like much of Spain's territory, it experienced the slow mutation of the political system after the fascist dictatorship, shaken by a strong labor movement and the armed rebellion of ETA and the *Comandos Autónomos Anticapitalistas* (CCAA).

It's unthinkable that punk, born of renunciation, would stay on the sidelines of this social movement. Especially when the forces of order were accustomed to detaining, frisking, beating, and robbing young punks. The majority of them were part of the working-class struggle, people who suffered the lurking crisis and exploitation. Manu, from the group NPI, has no doubt about why there was so much punk in his city, "Eskorbuto said it with three words: unemployment, misery, and humiliation."

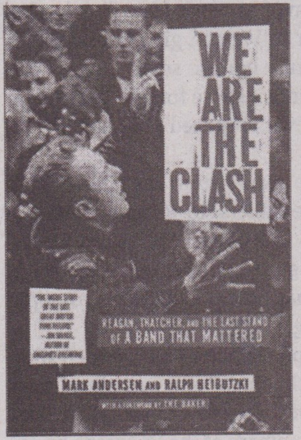
The first Basque punks couldn't travel to London for the weekend; they didn't go to high society parties. They spurned *la movida madrileña*. Their equipment was built from stolen parts, DIY'ed and improvised. "We went to phone booths, broke the handset and stole the speakers. We put those in Spanish guitars and connected it to a cassette player that my big brother had. We turned the volume up all the way to get that distorted guitar sound." (Javi, from *Kiskillas Farrangosas*)

From daily life an uncontrollable rebel spirit was born. "Enthusiasm and the urge for change. We wanted a revolution even though we had no idea what a revolution would be. We simply lived it and felt it" (Aitor, from *Deserción*). One interview after another reveals the hidden side of the 1980s: there is almost no trace of hope, the future didn't exist, but the present was intense. Dirty war, drugs, violence, machismo, the first squats, draft-dodging, political struggles, creativity...everything mixed together all at once.

There were fights, but also support. Older punks taught youngsters how to play and made space for them. Collaboration was necessary to squat a space, make it their own, take it forward, face the police, the fascists and the political class. Curiously, the majority of the people interviewed consider the current moment to be worse than those times, with a more uncertain future.

What does that leave us with? With their voices and a culture created by blows, from bits and pieces. A culture that dies if it doesn't reinvent itself, if it isn't supported by a collective effort. This is a fascinating project, and Andoni has done it on his own, discovering and sharing the forgotten punk of Bizkaia. Many of the rescued recordings from the interviewed bands are put online, to enjoy and destroy our ears, at mierdadebizkaia.bandcamp.com. *Mierda de Bizkaia* has encouraged others to rescue the history of their scenes, and that makes us very happy. Gipuzkoa will be next. *Eskerrik asko.*

—Hèctor (Translated by David Corkle)



We Are The Clash: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Last Stand of a Band that Mattered
Mark Andersen and Ralph Heibutzki
Akashic Books, 2018
374 pgs | $18.95

We Are The Clash: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Last Stand of a Band that Mattered picks up where most Clash histories end: The US Festival, 1983. Financed by Apple co-founder, Steve Wozniak, The US Festival was a last grasp towards some confused idea of corporate hippie values. The Clash played with a new drummer, having sacked Topper Headon ostensibly over a heroin addiction. Mick Jones, guitarist, and co-founder, who was about to experience a similar fate in a power struggle with Joe Strummer and their on again-off again manager and co-founder, Bernie Rhodes.

Strummer leaned on his microphone and barked at the crowd, "I suppose you don't want to hear me go on about this and that and what's up my ass." He moved off the mic and took on a new persona, "Try this on for size, 'Well, Hi everybody. Ain't it groovy. Ain't you sick of hearing that for the last 150 years.'"

By 1983 the Clash had "broke" in America with two hits off of the "Combat Rock" album. One had been, largely, played by Topper Headon and the other was written by Mick Jones. In the wake of their departure, Strummer doubled down on the key contradiction of the Clash. "Get the message out to as many people around the world as possible," as their roadie, The Baker, puts it in the book. "without having that message watered down to puerile pop nonsense." This was something the Clash hardly succeeded at during their tenure with concerns of hit records under the pressure of a recording company to whom they owed a large amount of debt.

In a sense, a new Clash was formed in the wake of the Jones/Headon departure. Two new guitar players and a new drummer along with the steadfast bassist, Paul Simonon and Strummer taking the lead singer slot. On bootlegs and a collection of early demos, The Clash Mark II emerges as a very solid band, although more like the best Clash tribute band ever than anything else.

It should be noted that before John Mellor became Joe Strummer, he was nicknamed Woody, after Woody Guthrie. That influence of folk music, not just of the Depression Era America but from around the world had a great influence on Strummer. He placed importance more on the integrity of the song's message than the talent of the songwriter. This idea becomes very real during the Clash's last tour where they busked in the streets of England with nothing but a few acoustic guitars and a pair of drumsticks (and a few hidden credit cards). As the novelist Tony White wrote at the time, "There were no ads in the music press... no press releases...no publicity campaigns...or photo ops...neither were there tour t-shirts, posters, or merchandise of any kind."

Meanwhile, Ian McGregor became the director of the National Coal Board, under Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. As the head of British Steel, McGregor has laid off over half of the steelworkers, from 166,000 down to 71,000 jobs. This was just the kind of efficiency that Thatcher sought. "Steel had been, up to that point, one of the pillars of the British economy since the Industrial Revolution," the two writers point out, "Still there was one commodity that was even more fundamental: coal." In due course, McGregor began to cut jobs and close coal mines according to a "death list."

At a conference for the National Union of Mineworkers, their leader, Arthur Scargill, issued a "call to action": "We can give in and watch social destruction and repression on a truly horrific scale… or we can fight back." So it was that the miners went on strike for over two years. A number of mines on the death list never reopened and most of the miners never went back to work.

The back and forth writing takes the reader from the Clash Mark II story to Thatcher, McGregor, and the miners, to Reagan's policies in America and in a larger sense, the Cold War. The Clash as the centerpiece, with a macroscopic few of global politic, mirrored by the struggles inside the Clash and their management, and the microscopic with Joe Strummer's own internal struggle.

The writers, Mark Andersen, and Ralph Heibutzki are an interesting pair. They have been "Archiving clippings and puzzling over unanswered questions," since hearing of the band's breakup in 1986. Andersen, as the reader may know, is a luminary of the DC scene he co-founded Positive Force during Revolution Summer and later detailed this period in a book: *Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capital*. More recently he has co-founded We Are Family DC which, according to their website, "mobilizes a committed corps of volunteers to reach out to isolated inner-city seniors with free services, advocacy, and companionship." Andersen also interviewed Joe Strummer in 1989 about Clash Mark II and this book is the first time any of that material has been used.

Heibutzki is a musician and writer from Michigan who has written for DISCoveries and Goldmine. The afterword states he was one of the first journalists to interview the three new members of Clash Mark II. This is his second book after *The Life and Times of Danny Gatton*.

I imagine it's no mistake that Andersen/Heibutzki wrote this book now, in an era of post-"neo-liberal"/"neo-conservative" politics in America and the disaster of Brexit in England. The shadows of Thatcher, Reagan, and The Cold War are cast all too close to our feet. With that in mind, and this might be beating a dead horse, but our current president and Reagan used the same campaign slogan: Make America Great Again.

The Clash may have not been the best example of integrity in the music world with their careerist opportunism but their message of hope and possibility, cribbed from Reggae and Soul music, is all too important, and borrowing Nixon's re-election slogan, "Now more than ever."

—SM

Tomorrow Is Too Late
Derek Emerson / Shawn Chirrey
UXB Press, 2018
307 pgs | $45.99

Holy crap! This book tears at the eyes and dares you to take hold of it. No corners cut on the production end of this project and this is evident the moment you take it in your hands. The details and attention put into this project needs mention, the authors/designers went all out and were meticulous on how this project was going to look. The print and layout were treated with care and love. The fore-edge of the book even has the title printed on it just to remind the reader that they fucking care. A labor of love is an understatement; it is obvious that it was an inside job rather than a study from some anthropology department.

If you were lucky enough to get the first edition of this book you will know that a killer 7" came as part of the deal. While the second edition does not have the record, it does include a poster and postcards.

Punks were clearly invested and the result is a sort of hyper-zine on a bag of speed. This is not an easy read—meaning you can get so lost in this book. I am finding that I cannot jump around like one normally does with many books, you will get lost in the labyrinth, it is best to take in a page at a time. There are chapters; then you realize there are sub-chapters. This is in-and-out Toronto Hardcore, not just bands, venues, zines, but also record shops, radio shows, sub-scenes, specific shows and attendees recollections of that night. The book even looks a bit into issues such as Animal Rights and Queercore as these expressions or ideologies took hold in the TO punk scene.

This is a comprehensive "stare" into the shift from punk to hardcore as it was interpreted by the newer breed of punks coming from Toronto, exiting the seventies. It is said that for Toronto it began with an anti-nuke rally/show that did not go as smoothly as planned. From this date on, everyone near enough to punk felt something was coming, a change. 1980 hit and punk started to speed up, things got aggressive, the music, life, the world, the attitude, and the times definitely changed. Tomorrow is too Late chronicles this change as it was channeled through numerous bands, zine editors, show promoters, and key players that all took part in making those changes happen. This book is an absolute must to add the growing list of books that have begun to give the world a bigger picture of what punk was and continues to be.

—Martin Sorrondeguy

Burning Down the Haus: Punk Rock, Revolution, and the Fall of the Berlin Wall
Tim Mohr
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2018
363 pgs | $28.95

Tim Mohr's deep dive into the punk movement of East Germany from the twilight of the '70s, through the penultimate fall of the devilish wall dividing the nation, is a heavy and captivating read. Mohr follows the travails of punks of all ages feeling their way through this new vehicle of opposition via the music, fashion, and a nascent vision of a self-made utopia

We all know the story and history of punk rock in the States unless you've opened this rag unceremoniously in the john of a friend's house or a trip to the local tattoo shop. Our cozy coalition of like-minded souls obsessed with flash bolt guitar riffs and a thunderous rhythm of low-end bass and trap slapping with an enormous crash cymbal to keep our ever-wavering attention. While some like to skate and surf, some like drugs others stay obsessively clean, some come to fight the power, still, others dig the clothes and other outward tokens of non-conformity—the underlying theme is actually inclusivity.

That's not an attempt to place punk in a box. I've always fancied it more a lifestyle than a music genre myself. It's far more than a few chords at breakneck speed with spitfire lyrics. When used correctly the power is astounding. Whether it's a crowd moving in a wave of inexplicable beauty from the pit to the back of the house, chaotically poetic and unnerving, or a political gathering, either in favor or against the grain, the message is unity. Individuality is encouraged but only to ultimately come together to form the larger mosaic, the true masterpiece.

In the United States, we're able to carry on in this fashion. Sure, there may be some parental push back or that tightwad principal who

incessantly finds a reason to detain you post-school hours based on your hairstyle or t-shirt choice but other than a few fights here and there, that's a pretty accurate summation of a punker's opposition in the States. Mohr's various protagonists risked whatever version of "freedom" or lack thereof that was possible in East Germany during those divided days. Pirate radio stations and those powerful enough from the West to be tuned in to by impressionable East German youth, if only long enough to hear a few measures of this voracious form of music that was like audible beacons of light. Light that could be taped and traded and more importantly emulated.

Soon these kids found ways to keep up with all things punk. Sham 69 and the Sex Pistols were just what the doctor ordered—guitars were sought, defiant poetry was ecstatically labored over, a search of things to bang on percussively was often quenched with pots, buckets, and empty suitcases. Whatever it took to make it happen for themselves until proper gear was found.

The DIY aesthetic was underway just like it was in the U.S. with drastically more dangerous repercussions. The government's secret police force was known as the Stasi, short for Ministry for State Security. The only thing they ministered was socialism; people leading a normal life of daily employment, going home after work, and conforming to the rules of the State. Hell-bent on psychological control and herding the sheep, the Stasi was immediately intimidated by the punk movement. Who would dare dress such a way and skip work to hang out at safe spaces, mostly churches with sympathetic caretakers who would provide spaces to cultivate this new and exciting form of protest?

These churches served as party spots and live music venues, basically as a church of punk in the off hours. Punks could congregate, listen to music, wax poetic on books and political misgivings, and create their own art. Safety was in numbers. It's when events dispersed that the punks were subject to Stasi harassment. Daily beatings and interrogations were the norm. Punks were risking life and limb for the movement quite literally. Mohr provides tireless details and stories that are equal parts inspiring as heartbreaking. This wasn't a movement of just music and protest, this was an attempt at breaking the socialistic norms, standing ground with guttural beliefs while being imprisoned and tortured, beaten down and (almost) silenced. Mohr's subjects were true heroes and revolutionaries, their unwavering gusto seemingly mythological but these are true tales.

As things grew with the DIY movement and more bands came along so did the classic ruse of Stasi informants. Embedded punks, fellow squatters, employers, and even family members were suspect. No one could be trusted and resistance was futile—all of this fuel for the fire of resistance. The movement became more than the music and a way to speak their truest thoughts, most of these kids became political prisoners and then ultimate resistance warriors steering the course and never wilting against the state until the wall was destroyed as were the diabolic ideologies of the East German government.

There is so much more to the story that is best told through the prose of Tim Mohr who was able to gain an inside look by working with East German punks who were there to write this book. A book that is steadfast and true, ever authentic and addicting, a true punk telling the actual "greatest story ever told." The powers that be are not always right, systems were made to be bucked and this is the blueprint as to how to succeed, take heed Americans young and old, we may need this sooner than later...

"We are the people, we are the power; don't die in the waiting room of the future."

—Scott Zuppardo

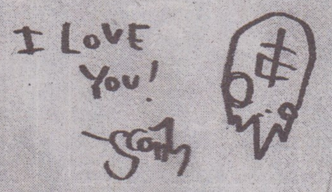
PUNK IS SUPPORT NOT COMPETITION

If you're living in a battle of the bands mentality you're fucking up. Friendship is the most important part of being in a scene. It's a community. You're not alone. If you need help, ask. If you can help, speak up. I'm so lucky I found you all. Find what's good and make it last.

p.s. the interview I did in 2006 I cheated and interviewed myself

"See you fucks at the bar!"

Happy to have released record for these bands over the last 17 years, some of them Maxi Rocker really liked!



DEADFALL, CASE OF EMERGENCY, FUNERAL SHOCK, JOHN THE BAKER AND THE MALNOURISHED, STRUNG UP, SCURVY DOGS, POPULATION REDUCTION, S.T.F.U., INSTANT ASSHOLE, I WILL KILL YOU FUCKER, SECOND OPINION, BORN/DEAD, PELIGRO SOCIAL, DIRECT CONTROL, MILLIONS OF DEAD COPS, ANNIHILATION TIME, GHOUL, KING GENERATOR, IMPALED, VOETSEK, VITAMIN X, ABSCESS, DIOS MIO, CANNABIS CORPSE, A.N.S, AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED, FACE THE RAIL, TOXIC HOLOCAUST, INEPSY, MUNICIPAL WASTE, KICKING SPIT, RAMMING SPEED, SHITTY FUCKER, KICKER, VICTIMS, OBSESSOR, NIGHT FEVER, BRAINOIL, VOLTURE, IRON REAGAN, CONQUEST FOR DEATH, EXHUMED, BAT, FINAL CONFLICT, FUCKED UP, THE SHRINE, NIGHT BIRDS, LECHEROUS GAZE, CONNOISSEUR, DYSTOPIA, VIVISICK, SPAZZ, NECROT, DENY THE CROSS, CLITERATI, FUCK YOU PAY ME, ILL BILL, MORTUOUS, DEATHGRAVE, LOS HUAYCOS

Thank you. Peace!

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

PUNK'S NOT DEAD

It is both ironic and appropriate that my film column for the final print issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* starts with a documentary simply called *Punk*. The documentary is currently well known for the verbal spat between Johnny Lydon and Marky Ramone at the film's Los Angeles premiere. The filmmakers could not have planned a better publicity campaign for it. It is humorous to see two punk senior citizens arguing over who is more punk. Like him or not Lydon won this one. His comeback to Ramone claiming Sid Vicious was the star of the Sex Pistols is "He was the star for asshole fake idiots like you. Enjoy your drugs and fuckin' have a happy death." Though I would argue that if he was involved in it Marky Ramone obviously survived the drug scene so that argument really isn't valid. Even still it's entertaining shit.

Too bad *Punk* isn't. We've heard these stories thousands of times. This time it comes across as aging punks making sure they claim their place in punk history. As with most tales the more you tell them the more the details get tweaked. People start telling what they remember blended with something they heard someone else tell. If you watch enough of these documentaries you can see the progression. What is the truth? We'll probably never know. How much do these small details matter?

Punk is produced by Iggy Pop and John Varvatos. Varvatos is a fashion designer who is notable for opening his clothing shop where CBGBs used to be. The interviews in *Punk* are shot like a fashion shoot. Each interviewee is seated on a sofa in the middle of a big empty warehouse. Some play records on a record player on a table in front of them. The choices of who get interviewed are questionable. Terry Chimes representing the Clash does not make sense when every clip they show of the band has Topper Headon in it. There are some interesting interviews. Dave Vanian of the Damned is relaxed and jokes about Malcolm McLaren by comparing him to Fagin. Bad Brains' Darryl Jenifer discusses his method for playing the bass.

The first episode of *Punk* starts with a bunch of talking heads repeating some form of "Punk's not dead". An immediate eye roller. Then the story delves into Iggy Pop and the Stooges and the MC5. *Gimme Danger* and *MC5: A True Testimonial* respectively that do a better job of telling their story. The stories here are an outline. I have to wonder for whom *Punk* is being made. It's definitely not for people into punk.

Episode two goes to London for the Sex Pistols story. We've heard this one too many times as well. The more interesting part of this episode is the acknowledgement and focus of the females in the scene. Unfortunately it is too short-sighted focusing mostly on the Slits. Not surprisingly the Slits also have their own documentary *Here To Be Heard*. The other odd thing about this segment is having Thurston Moore comment on the importance of women in the punk scene. Kim Gordon wasn't available?

Episode three is about hardcore focusing on Black Flag and DOA. Unfortunately, it gives too much time to Keith Morris who spews about Black Flag not following the "punk handbook" because they didn't know what was in it and other oddities. There is talk of the beginning of the all-ages show and the punk touring network that are interesting tidbits. When hardcore devolves into jocks and neo-nazis beating people up at shows, the male interviewees start to talk of being afraid at shows and needing to punch people in self-defense. Henry Rollins even reminisces about punching someone in the face who just tried to talk to him. This bit humorously ends with Harley Flanagan lamenting violence taking over the scene. This is some revisionism at its finest.

Unfortunately, episode four was not available to me before my deadline. The teaser was Kathleen Hanna discussing wanting to take punk back from the jocks of hardcore. Could Riot Grrrl to be the next trajectory of *Punk*?

Trying to sum up punk in four 50 minutes episodes is ultimately useless. You and I know there is more to the story than New York and London taking cues from Detroit and spawning DC and L.A. There is so much left out and it leaves you feeling like the majority of these people don't get it. Maybe we should ask some of them if they could name a punk band who released their first album in 2018. That might be fun. (epix.com)

For a palate cleanser I turn to *Rip It Up Unwrapped, Punk* a short BBC documentary about punk in Scotland. From the BBC website "For many, Punk is seen as a movement of two cities—London and New York, both eternally sparring for the title of The Originator". They might be poking fun at *Punk*. The first band they mention is the Rezillos. Singer Fay Fife says when they started their band they had not heard of the Ramones or the Sex Pistols. They formed in 1976 so it's possible.

I always enjoy how almost every punk documentary incorporates that footage of Keith Emerson in his shiny jumpsuit rocking out between walls of keyboards. *Rip It Up Unwrapped, Punk* flipped this filmmaking staple on its ear opting for Jethro Tull sporting a cod piece and playing his flute to represent bloated '70s rock. I was amused.

Besides the Rezillos *Rip It Up Unwrapped, Punk* tells the stories of Johnny and the Self-Abusers, the Scars, the Skids, Fire Engines, Josef K and others. Although it starts with the main cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, the bands start coming from the smaller towns. Jim Kerr of Johnny and the Self Abusers and later Simple Minds jokes about hearing of how great the Skids were. He could not imagine them being that great. They were from Dunfermline. Naturally, he changes his mind after seeing them.

There is also talk of how the Glasgow City Council banned punk after a Stranglers gig. The kids didn't give up they just moved their shows to Paisley. Clare Grogan of Altered Images exclaims is that why we went to Paisley to see shows? This is the attitude I want passed on to the new punks. (bbc.co.uk)

Thanks to you for reading this column for twenty plus years. It's been fun writing about films from a punk's perspective for punks. Thanks to all the *MRR* coordinators since 1998 who have indulged this desire of mine. Thanks to all the filmmakers who sent in their films for review. I always enjoyed your perspectives and views, no matter what my review said. Thanks to my husband Michael who was always helpful in getting me those films I wanted to review that weren't made available to me as well as some I didn't know I wanted to see. Thanks to Steve Spinali who shared this space writing about films when it was first started. I hope you are doing well. Thanks to the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™ for allowing me to be president this past decade. I hope to continue my reign far into the future. As the in-joke that gets repeated around my household goes "I read *Maximum Rocknroll* for the movie reviews."

RECORDS

For review and radio play consideration, send two copies of vinyl or one copy of CD-only releases to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA. We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-owned distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include contact information and let us know where your band is from! No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork. All records reviewed are added to our archive, the largest collection of punk records in the world.

(AJ) Ali Tadayon
(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(DG) Dan Goetz

(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JD) Joan DeToro
(JR) Jason Ryan
(KK) Kenny Kaos
(KS) Ken Sanderson

(LG) Layla Gibbon
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(PA) Pete Avery
(PC) Paul Curran
(RL) Ray Lujan
(WN) Robert Collins

ACTIVE MINDS – "Religion Is Nonsense" 10"

How appropriate that ACTIVE MINDS have a review in the final print issue of *MRR*, as a band that seem to have been flying the flag for DIY punk and hardcore almost as long as the mag has been around (or at least as long as I remember!). This is just the latest in a vast discography of fiercely political hardcore punk in a variety of guises, whether DISCHARGE worship or melodic LEATHERFACE type fare, but always with a message first and foremost. Several of the songs on this record are based loosely around the titular theme of religious hypocrisy and exploitation of children. Did I mention it comes wrapped in a printed ACTIVE MINDS patch?! It really does my heart good to know that these folk are still at it, still active. (AM)
(Loony Tunes / Masapunk / La Société Pue Prod / Tutajteraz)

GREG ANTISTA AND THE LONELY STREETS – "Shake, Stomp, and Stumble" CD

This tuneful band has a lot of SoCal history, with ex-members of JOYRIDE, MANIC HISPANIC, CADILLAC TRAMPS, and DI. This also includes a song by Steve Soto, who was also in JOYRIDE. This reminds me of the country side of recent SOCIAL DISTORTION, with nice harmonies and instrumentation. Not for thrashers, but this is pretty good stuff for the aging punk circuit. (RL)
(self-released)

ARTERIES – LP

Portland's ARTERIES take everything we know about the last 40 years of punk, and distill it down to a concentrated liqueur of all the best elements. Freaky and experimental, they weave otherworldly anthems with haunting group vocals, effervescent synth effects, persistent post-punk basslines, and unexpected turns. It brings to mind the unlikely combination of sounds like the SCREAMERS and LOST CHERREES. Members of Portland's RED HERRING and RAW NERVES. I am blown away by how great this is. (HB)
(Nadine)

ART OF BURNING WATER / STUNTMAN – split EP

France's STUNTMAN bring us some pummeling metallic grind. This is a band that can do the hair-pulling sludge agony just as well as they do the machine gun maelstrom. Grindcore forever! The UK's ART OF BURNING WATER throw down a little bit of proper powerviolence—maybe too little. My issue with their side is that the first and longer song is OK, but it's more like a buildup/intro song. Then the second song is fucking sick as shit, but it's only like twenty seconds long, and that's the end of the record. It's like, dude, you gotta save that intro song for the LP. That being said, it's still a pretty cool listen. (BA)
(Bigoût / Dingleberry / Ecstatic Shock / Emergence / Jungle Khôl / SuperFi / WOOAAARGH)

BAD SLEEP – LP

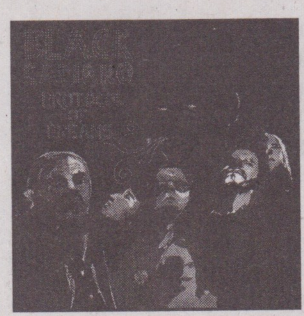
Very scrappy pop punk from Olympia, WA. Like a messy FASTBACKS trying to play PROTEX with a bratty attitude. So yes, it is awesome! Perfect sweaty basement freakout music. Songs about relationships, self doubt, desire, and boredom. Badass! (FS)
(Specialist Subject / Square of Opposition / Stupid Bag)

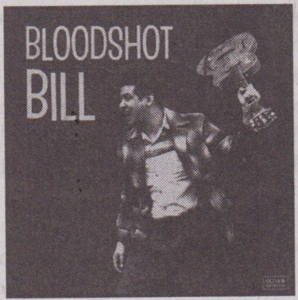
BAD WIG / SIN BAD – split LP

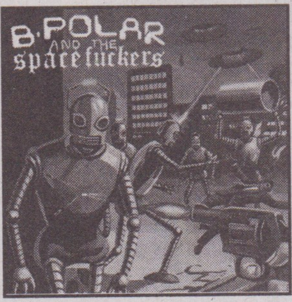
Two Milwaukee pop punk bands team up to give us a super fun pogo-inducing album! SIN BAD deliver a more power pop sound that might be equitable to GATEWAY DISTRICT or WORRIERS. BAD WIG is still very much pop punk, but has heavy garage elements. A mix of OBLIVIANS, REIGNING SOUND, and DINOSAUR JR can be heard in their songs. They also toy with some emo elements, so their sound chills out every once in a while. Start with the SIN BAD side for the sugar high and end with BAD WIG for the slow headbang. Great record! Milwaukee has always and will always rule. Don't listen to the haters! (FS)
(Kitschy Spirit)

BALLADMEN – "Dear Old-Fashioned Rhythm" LP

I find it a little disheartening that my last print reviews for *MRR* should start out this way. I know that over the years, I've been pigeonholed into the garage rock sphere, but I've been writing for this magazine for 29 years, and I can say to most: "I was a punk before you were a punk, punk." This is roots rock music with an emotive singer who unfortunately reminds me of EDDIE VEDDER. It's slick and well-played and Japanese and might come across better if I wasn't feeling so nostalgic. But the heavy grunge vibe is just too much. (CK)
(Debauch Mood)







THE BECAUSE – "Get Out Through The Back Door" LP

At every turn on this LP, the BECAUSE channel the same humid yet sensitive roaring that I equate with noteworthy vintage acts via (ahem) No Idea Records and the ilk. Their devotion to the form is quite studied: there's this barreling sound, anthem-focused, tension-and-release style. Trouble is, there's no teeth, no deviance, barely anything punk beyond their mid-tempo charge. Underwhelming. (MC)
(Debauch Mood)

BETTY MACHETE AND THE ANGRY COUGARS – "Stay in Your Lane" EP

It's not just a clever name, this band is pissed off. Remember how in the '90s, there were all these bands infatuated with the DWARVES and playing punk songs as fast as humanly possible? This band fits right in with all that crazy-off-the-rails madness. Half shitty CIRCLE JERKS, half shitty JUDAS PRIEST. All songs about anger, revenge, and destruction. This shit is crazy. But if you need a good soundtrack to blow off some steam and drive like a maniac, this is your ticket. (FS)
(H-Bomb)

BLACK CAMARO – "Protocol of Dreams" LP

Wow, what an unexpected record. The first track starts out with a Two-Tone/DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS-style ska/soul punk vibe. Things progress into more early aughts OH SEES psych-pop, with weird sunshine pop vibes like ARIEL PINK. From there, it's like hard-wave OINGO BOINGO—they really are going there. Not sure what the typical *MRR* fan would think of all this, but it's cool to hear people testing the waters with always poppy but somewhat unconventional results. On red wax with insert. (GB)
(Black Camaro Music / Running In Place)

BLACKCAT MANOR – "From Here On Out" CD

This midwest band plays punk metal. This five-song EP is sometimes screamo and sometimes sung vocals, with lots of musical chops and twists. Although I like somewhat similar bands like STRUNG OUT and PROPAGANDHI, as well as metal in general, this just sounds too generically thrashy for me. (RL)
(self-released)

BLACK UNIFORMS – "Face of Death" CD

Splattering metal punk from the Scandinavian hive of hardcore: Malmö, Sweden. BLACK UNIFORMS play motörcharged D-beat raw punk for all the moonlight rambling crashers. You get G-ZET, INEPSY, NAILBITER, and DIS-BONES style bammers, and heck, it even sounds like AMEBIX at times. This CD has both the original 1989 version of *Faces of Death* and the 2001 remastering. You know you want it! (JR)
(Black Konflik)

THE BLANKZ – "Getting Over You / Barfly"

I feel like a BLANKZ single comes in every month. Prolific! "Getting Over You" is really slick pop punk of the Fat Wreck variety. The new wave keys seem to be the only deviation from the force-fed processed punk here. "Barfly" is more of the same, though fares a lil' better, and actually reminds me of HEAD if they were going the tuff-guy route. Still, it's too artificially sweet for me to choke down. (MC)
(Slope)

BLOODSHOT BILL – "Come Get Your Love Right Now" LP

The seventh album from this Montreal one-man-band guy. It sounds old-timey, with a country-ish ELVIS PRESLEY twang mixed with a TAV FALCO sound. The music is rough and raw and has a great sound. Catchy, fun, and sultry. (CK)
(Goner)

BOMBANFALL – "Åsiktsfrihet" CD

It is remarkably bittersweet to be writing my final reviews for the print edition of *MRR*, but what a distinct honor it was to receive this reissue of one of the greatest Swedish hardcore EPs ever...that was followed up by nothing. As far as I'm concerned, this is pretty much the epitome of Scandinavian hardcore that captures both a melodic legendary folklore sound, and despairingly raw punk fueled with grandiose, godless hammering. Unless you want to spend $150 on one of mine, you absolutely must pick this up. It's pretty much a flawless, organically played, sincerely furious, monstrously echoing, pulpit-orated, masterpiece of extreme/DIY music history, which inspired so many future compositions. I know that's a lot of praise to print. Well, here's my chance. (JR)
(Black Konflik)

B.POLAR AND THE SPACEFUCKERS – "We Not Come in Peace" EP

Ah shit! Usually when we get cover art containing a dystopian robot scene it almost always sounds like a third-tier MAN OR ASTROMAN?, or some dumbfucks who think they sound like DEVO (they never do). B.POLAR AND THE SPACEFUCKERS sound like fuckin' punk and hardcore, though. Dude is screaming his head off about enslaving the humans, crop circles, the emotionless void of a robot brain, and getting the fucking Alpha Centauri skinheads off of your planet!! The backup vocals sound robotic, and the songs have some weird changes in them to keep it interesting throughout. Definitely a surprise and a rager. (GH)
(Emergence / Flail / KLVR / Love Mazout)

CANKRO – "Reflexo da Verdade" EP

This record is pure evil. It has literally everything you want: moshy breakdowns, tupa-tupa beats, reverb-y vocals, DISCHARGE-esque D-beat riffs…just everything. The most obvious contemporary comparison that comes to mind is DESTINO FINAL, but this 7" seems punchier than what that band put out. This record would definitely hold up to MURO's *Ataque Hardcore* LP. (AJ)
(Nada Nada)

CATCH AS CATCH CAN – "Garst / Won't Deny"

Here's a previously unreleased 2016 recording by this German garage punk outfit that's been at it for a few years. On "Garst," distorted vocals, '60s organ pulses, bouncy beats, and surfy guitars all meld together to form a rough yet groovy number that'll make you wanna scream and do the pony. "Won't Deny" is in a more psych vein, while not getting too trippy, and staying in the surf/garage vein. A one-sided, yellow vinyl 7" with a riso print cover that's worth checking out. (PC)
(Stencil Trash)

THE CAVEMEN – "Lowlife" EP

I'm not sure why, but this record has a sort of Rip Off Records feel to it. Maybe it's the black and white paper sleeve. Maybe it's the relatively lo-fi production. If you're a fan of straightforward punk rock that is raw and gritty, but still catchy and melodic, this is definitely for you. The B-side even gets a little swampy, but doesn't lose the feel of the other cuts. This is worth going out of your way to find. (KK)
(Slovenly)

CHACHI ON ACID / BUTCH HALLER & HIS CHESTERFIELD RAMBLERS – split EP

This is a funny one. Two bands, each offering up a single song, and it happens to be the same song: "Everyone's a Urinal." Is this a famous song that I'm not familiar with? Fuck, this is bugging me. Anyway, the CHACHI ON ACID version is a fairly straightforward punk version of the song. It's catchy and well done. But the BUTCH HALLER take is a twangy country/rockabilly number. It's also catchy and nicely done. Now if I could just figure out the mystery of the song. (KK)
(Agoraphobic Record Syndicate)

CLARKO – "I Just Wanna Pay / Medeocre Man"

One can almost picture CLARKO hard at work in his basement as they hear these two stripped-down, sarcastic and angsty yet bouncy solo new wave ditties. "I Just Wanna Pay" is driven by punchy synth bursts and light square wave hits, while "Medeocre Man" is more guitar-driven and a bit more brooding, as our protagonist lashes out at his subject with lines like *"Your life is stupid / And I am poor!"* This is one of five records in Iron Lung Records' new Systemic Surgery series, and is now sold out. (DG)
(Iron Lung)

CLOUD RAT / THE WORLD IS A VAMPIRE – split LP

A beautifully played piano starts out the CLOUD RAT side, coupled with delicate, warm, and haunting vocals. This seamlessly tumbles into ruthless, crust-stenched, abysmal riffs, with high and tight drums. This dark, dense, churning, hexing grind and crust reminds me of the terrifying sounds of EBOLA, the fury of INITIAL STATE, the metallic bewitching nature of CETASCEAN, and the chaotic maelstrom that came with SKARP. CLOUD RAT is all things steady punk D-beat, blasting grind, and blackened metal sorcery. THE WORLD IS A VAMPIRE calms the nerves with pulverizing, heavy drudge metal. The vocals spew forth like a cindering furnace; and the chords are subtly disharmonic, creating an off-kilter, unsettling hypnotic rhythm. Calculated but surprising effects pierce through the thick tones. Parts indie rock, parts cacophonous doom punk—I'm really digging this side too! The last track is a brilliant cover of TEARS FOR FEARS' "Mad World." Yes! This split is definitely recommended for the dismal, strange, and curious. (JR)
(Feast of Tentacles)

COLLATE – "Communication / Selective Memory"

Portland's COLLATE continue with their angular and distinctive sound. With idiosyncratic guitar and punctuated vocals, it's like a KRAFTWERK and GANG OF FOUR mashup. "Communication" is almost robotic, with an occasional release, followed by an epic, noisy, and tangled flop at the end. Flip to side B. "Selective Memory" is strange funk with infrequent shouts, and the striking of clean, unfiltered guitar. Art school dropout punk right here. (CR)
(Market Square)

COWBOYS – "The Bottom of a Rotten Flower" LP

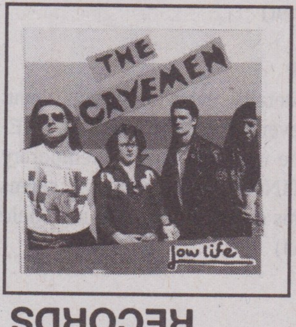
Holy pop, Batman! A new one from Bloomington Indiana's COWBOYS, and it's all pop. Somehow, they seem to channel more of an Anglo-centric UK sound, recalling some end of the '70s first-wave poppers with a mix of straight riff o' rama à la PROTEX/ UNDERTONES, and more angular sounds like XTC or THE JAM. The best part is they stay true to form, and these songs all top out around three minutes, so if you're not feeling one song, it's only about a minute to the next. Comes with a cool fold-out poster and the hype sticker is penned by Eddie Flowers of the GIZMOS. (GB)
(Feel It)

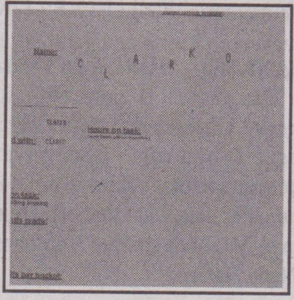
CRONANDER – "Trapped" CD

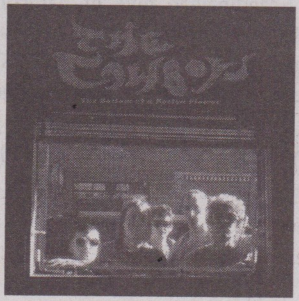
Oakland's CRONANDER fucks around with skate thrash, with heavy touches of metal and classic rock thrown in the mix. The vocals deal with the utter and complete dissatisfaction of modern daily life, adding no hyperbole and pulling no punches. Like, there's an anti-cop song that the singer claims he wrote at age ten, and that same bluntness permeates the lyrics throughout. If you go to a skate park and see a dude skating in tight, faded blue jeans and a THIN LIZZY shirt, give him this CD and y'all will probably spend the afternoon stoned. Members of ANNIHILATION TIME and ANS. (GH)
(Annihilate / Lummox)

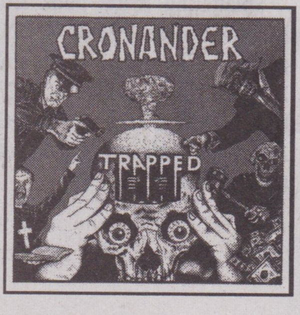
ARNO DE CEA & THE CLOCKWORK WIZARDS / THE ORIONS – split EP

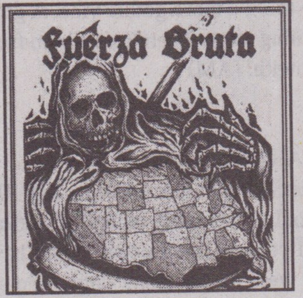
If you're a fan of eerie, surfy instrumentals, you're in luck, as THE ORIONS deliver two of them. ARNO DE CEA are seemingly into the same sort of thing, though their guitar gets a little more grindy. Both bands do it well. It's also nicely produced and mixed, without sounding too produced. Nice effort. (KK)
(Calico / Crapoulet / Emergence)











DIÄT – "Positive Disintegration" LP

Four years following the excellent *Positive Energy,* we are presented with the dense *Positive Disintegration*. The overall tone here is sullen and tragic, distinctly marked by a subdued, deadpan vocal style and repetitious rotating rhythms. Build-until-release style songwriting, pulsating and throbbing drum sounds, but they're still a "rock band." Simple guitar hooks act as choruses, and the vocals appear almost as a support to the strong rhythm section, but it's important to note the relevant lyrical themes. Relatable, biting criticism and satire of our social circles, ourselves, and the society that we wish we weren't inherently a part of. Predictably, my favorite is the most uptempo "Foreign Policy," which has an unmistakable CHAMELEONS vibe, *and* appears to be a critique of the way their fellow Germans approach Palestinian struggle (cue applause). It's hard not to think of TOTAL CONTROL, though DIÄT feels a bit more focused (just to be clear, I'm not choosing either one). This album doesn't smack you in the face like the last, but if you show up, it might sneak up behind and drag you into a dark pit of hellish reality. (MA)
(Iron Lung)

DON GATTO – "Sawdown" CD

Ummm...tough guy hardcore mixed with mall punk? Or maybe this is just mall punk now. Heavy guitars and drums with brutal-dude vocals. It's shocking how it sounds so metallic and tough one moment, and super poppy the next. They must really be trying to make it, with *eighteen* sponsor logos on the rear cover. Four tracks from this Hungarian band. (MA)
(Edge / Hammerworld)

THE EMBARRASSMENT – "Celebrity Art Party" 12"

One of the best examples of nervous college art damage to have graced this meager continent! The title track is a sprawling, taut catchy masterwork of tension, and VU/FEELIES/early TALKING HEADS/ COME ON incantations that should make you wanna fervently consume this immediately! This wild scene was happening in Wichita in 1981! The cover art has killer George Grosz meets *Zap Comix* damage which is adds to the fact that this is a perfect 12"! Each song creates its own world you will want to root around in or observe ironically from yr detached, too-smart-to-art student drop out mind. This is pop music that deconstructs punk! Why not grab this reissue and use it as a guide book to do the same? (LG)
(Last Laugh)

THE EMPTY BOTTLES – "No Sense for the Cause" CD

The punk duck from that old Bubble Yum commercial is all grown up (with a red mohawk this time), sporting an Antifa neck tattoo on the cover of this CD (I can get down with that), and presumably drinking with the boys at the pub or whatever (ehh...). The music is barely-tolerable bar punk, where one moment is indistinguishable from the next (except for the gang vocals, which make me prefer their default state of monotony), and their song "Overpopulation" regurgitates that stupid liberal eugenics myth. At least there's a funny song about Lars (not that one, the other one) selling out because he shaved his head. (DG)
(Audiosiege / Hearse)

FREAK – "Ritual Death" EP

Stark raving madness from subterranean Los Angeles, circa 2015. Ya see, *Ritual Death* was FREAK's lone offering, these sounds heretofore available only via a handful o' scattered demo tapes. Vague Absolutes, in their infinite and drool-prompting wisdom, pressed 107 copies (!) to 7" wax, which is at least 393 too few if ya ask me. FREAK's fury and filth—gutter-level blood-drip ugliness—is so expertly communicated, so literate, that you'll think you're dreamin'. Thug vocals, bashing rhythm, slither riffing, real grime, too punk. As with the wondrous (and FREAK-related) INDEX demo that Vague Absolutes excavated a few years ago, here's a bright fuckin' light on a band that's far too sick to ignore. So fucking good! Probably a goner by the time you see this, but know that it exists and know that it fucking destroys. (MC)
(Vague Absolutes)

FRIED EGG – "Square One" LP

This is one of the best releases I've heard in 2019. Imagine *Damaged*-era BLACK FLAG, with vocals that sound like HOAX, and some VOID-esque riffs thrown in the mix. The whole package—the music, the lyrics, the album art—sort of has this sense of yuckiness to it: the discomfort you might feel from, say, stepping in puke. Two things really bring that out: the sporadic BLACK FLAG-y single-note lead riffs, and the raw screaming of hella self-deprecating lyrics such as "*Tongue turns to jelly / The thoughts in my belly / Fist to my forehead / Frustration*" and "*Existing for existence's sake / Consuming for consumption's sake / When it comes to things / I only take.*" (AJ)
(Feel It)

FUERZA BRUTA – "Somos el Mal" EP

A thing I don't do often: sit down and listen to a modern (or old) Oi! record. The *Lord of the Rings*-like orchestral instrumental is an appropriate introduction, as there's an epic dual-guitar approach to all three tracks. Without relying on cheesy Oi! tendencies, FUERZA BRUTA is just pure honest and tough punk sung in Spanish, with huge gang vocals and good hooks. I even perceive a hardcore influence in production and delivery. Good-lookin' old school styled glue pocket sleeve, too. Get it and get trampled. (MA)
(Warthog Speak)

GATTOPARDO – "Cleo" EP

Enigmatic post-punk from São Paulo. "Cleo" could have easily fit on the Rough Trade roster in 1979: jangling, clattering funky post-punk, with a smattering of sax. On the flip, "As Bruxas" takes the listener down a BAUHAUS doom spiral: a darker sound introduced by more

chorus on the guitar lends the whole thing a more gothic vibe. A great introduction that left this listener wanting more. There's an album from 2014 that I will be investigating forthwith. (AM)
(Nada Nada)

GENITAL JUGGLING / JODIE FASTER – split LP

Don't judge a book by its cover, lesson one: *this fukkn record*. The stupid cartoon claymation cover would turn most punks off before they even saw the band names, and I confess that I never would have given this slab a second thought if it were not my punk duty to do so. And holy shit did I eat my thoughts as soon as JODIE FASTER started cranking through five absolute rippers that sound like nothing at all except (apparently) JODIE FASTER. A raw drum attack that reminds me of RUDIMENTS, a penchant for don't-give-a-fuck combined with serious chops à la SCHLONG, open chord clean guitars like JASPER THREAD, and an overall purity in their ferocity that I haven't heard since I saw ROLEX last year. I didn't want to turn the record over. But I did. And GENITAL JUGGLING delivered the same energy on the flip—just as much irreverence in their song construction, but with a SoCal hardcore tinge, and aggression replacing the quirk on the A-side. Listen to all of the records, punks—even the ones you think aren't up to whatever your bullshit "standards" are—because chances are good that you are wrong. This record is definitely right. (WN)
(Acouphenes! / Crapulent / Dirty Guys Rock / Don't Trust The Hype / Emergence / Keponteam / KLVR / Loner Cult / Ribé / Spit It Out)

HEZ – "Problemas" EP

Oh *fuck yeah*! Dark, atmospheric punk from Panama that doesn't rely on bullshit deathrock and goth tropes to carry their songs. And this is one of few bands to successfully use delayed vocals to aid mood instead of as a crutch. Nothing here ever goes faster than mid-tempo, but each song still maintains an intensity that most punk bands would die to have. (JD)
(Enfermos / Lógica Ciega / World Gone Mad)

HOMELESS CADAVER – "Fat Skeleton / Art. Eat It."

Each track has a different vibe, and each is an instant classic. "Art. Eat It." is a two-riff dirge, punctuated by electronics, and the title repeated as a dreary one line chorus. "Fat Skeleton" is more upbeat, just as simple, and hopelessly catchy. Ohio vibes abound (DEVO and/or Wheelchair Full of Old Men), and I'm pretty sure these kids have heard the SPITS before. Beefy guitars and extra confidence in the "don't give a fukk" department—I think I'm gonna enjoy this Systemic Surgery series from Iron Lung Records. (WN)
(Iron Lung)

INKWIZYCJA – "Stare Fotografie" LP

Here's a reissue (first time on vinyl) of this long-running Polish band's second album from 2002. Stylistically, it's loose with discordant jamming elements countering some of the melodies, mostly slow to mid-paced, and a gruff vocal delivery. While I acknowledge the historical significance of the band in the Polish punk scene, this album doesn't do much to keep my attention. Much of it just sounds like alt-rock. (MA)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

INVISIBLE TEARDROPS – "Endless Winter" LP

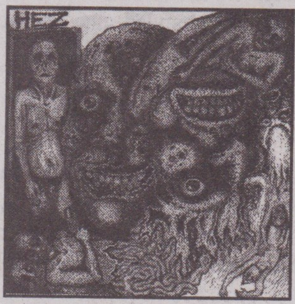
"96 Tears"-type organ pumps furiously over this teenage dream circa 1965. It has a real Naugahyde diner seat ambience, *Archie* comix, faux maple syrup, battle of the bands in the high school cafeteria—a nostalgic veneer kept on rather than fucked with. The final song on the LP gets a little wild, but it reminds me of a strange and not-enjoyable-to-me combo of the MISFITS and SCREECHING WEASEL. Pop punkers that are riding the Burger Records wave?! The teenage talent show band stuff is fine—a gentle dream, an estate sale photo of a time that never really existed—but I think I would rather listen to a *Pebbles* comp than this. The lyrical and song ideas are evocative and cool, but the musical execution is sorta AM radio oldies post-*Happy Days*. (LG)
(Arkam)

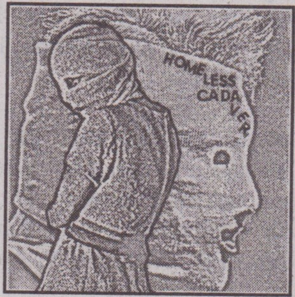
KICKER – "Pure Drivel" LP

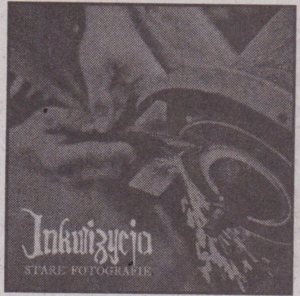
Driven by totally lethal, near-perfect buzzsaw guitar leads, KICKER's third LP narrows in a little sonically closer to some of its UK82 anarcho-punk inspiration—CRASS, SUBHUMANS, and just a pinch at times of RUDIMENTARY PENI weirdness—by thinning the recording in the right places, and drawing back to an apropos, basic sturdy drum sound while still giving their inventive bass lines space to meander. Pete the Roadie's (now even more) gnarled vocals spew and swagger over the top, flopping comedic and ironic missives that retain a distinctly personal feel. While some are sarcastic disbelief about common punk topics like nuclear annihilation, the inanity of mass media, or killers in the news, most are red-card day-to-day things like not being able to sleep, wankers on the bus, and escaping the city. The charm of these ten sarcastic songs is that while they offer no solutions, they do provide relatable camaraderie in shaking your head, raising your fist, and singing along in mirth and outrage as you spill your beer. "Goodnight and Fuck Off," the quasi-soul hallraker that ends the record, might tip the hand that a member of SCHLONG has joined the band(!). Packaged in a nice gatefold sleeve with colored vinyl, there are fewer catchy hits here than their previous outings, but the ten tracks trade off for far more settled consistency in one of their strongest footings. (KS)
(Tankcrimes)

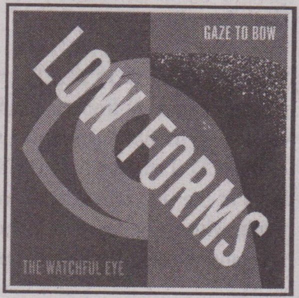
LIQUOR STORE – "Scumbag / We Buy Gold"

Since I do study the record sleeve while listening to the music, I got a good laugh. © 2020, hahaha. Since it's only 2019, I suppose that means this music is freely available all year for all your projects, films, and commercials. Go crazy. LIQUOR STORE have a laid back, decadent rock'n'roll vibe. The music is stretched out and catchy. The

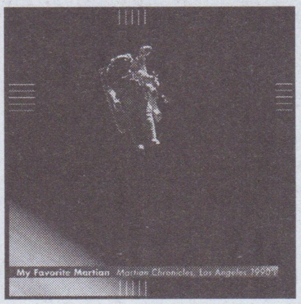








RECORDS



lyrics are not that brilliant: "*Swimming with the fishes / Never wash the dishes,*" from the A-side. The two songs go on a bit too long, but are still enjoyable. (CK)
(Almost Ready)

LOW FORMS – "Gaze to Bow / The Watchful Eye" LP
This is an interesting concept for a record, and the band pulls it off well. It's one album, but both sides are presented as two different suites of music, showcasing different facets of the band's presentation. "Gaze to Bow" is slower, atmospheric and contemplative, focusing their energy in a way that feels like a long drive across the plains. There are only three songs, and they all blend into each other seamlessly and beautifully. "The Watchful Eye" has a more upbeat and poppy sound which can kinda fall into the camp of REPLACEMENTS, RVIVR and the stomp of TOYS THAT KILL. The four songs on this side also blend into each other, but they stand alone as different songs with their own hooks and melodies. Even though both of these sides are fairly different from one another, I think they both complement each other well, and it has a really good feeling overall. (GH)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

LOW LIFE – "Downer EDN" LP
Bleak anthems that evoke a late-'80s post-hardcore musical landscape: dark shards of guitar and vocal intonations, with desolate lyrical incisions into the void of macho culture... A total sound, a wall of guitar where there's something for people that want the big guitar sound somewhere between the CULT and BIG BLACK, but also require a punishing hardcore pummel. The post-punk flange sound is stripped of any aesthetic pose and used as another aural weapon. There's a weary fury to this: what are men for, what destruction do they do to those stuck around them in the stands of sporting grounds, in the family home? There's no respite to the totality, no answer, just a lived experience expressed through sound. (LG)
(Goner)

MEINHOF – "The Dying Light" LP
Terrifying D-beat anarcho-crust with a formidable low end and a clear soft spot for thick hardcore. That they aren't scared of an open E and a prolonged chug is not what makes MEINHOF so good; it's that they avoid all of the trappings associated with heavy hardcore by making everything sound punk. The instrumental "The Anarchist" that opens the B-side is a perfect example—massive ringing stadium crust that sounds filthy and dark, and leads right into "No Hope No Change," a relentless fist-in-the-air motorkång banger. Vocals are biting and desperate, with an urgency that defies the decade plus that MEINHOF have been in the game. Colossal production gives them an even bigger bootprint, and makes this a "stand up and pay attention" release from start to finish. (WN)
(Deviance / Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

MENTAL FIX – "Bricolage" CD
I guess it feels like I've heard them countless times before, even though this Montreal band was a new discovery. Gruff and melodic punk rooted in the greats, with massive sounding guitars and carefully crafted backing vocals—it just sounds like sweat and sing alongs. Early DILLINGER FOUR, AGAINST ME!...you get the drill, and so do MENTAL FIX. (WN)
(Urban Sleep)

MENTIRA – "Autointitulado" EP
Electro-darkwave duo from Barcelona. Simplistic bass with shouty vocals spattered over a sparse Casio melody, and it's pretty cool. "História Sem Graça" is an obscure, early '80s techno tune—equally sparse, and equally rad. It comes with the *Guerra* flexi, which has a lighter more pastoral sound, with vocals dreamier than the 7"—almost like the vibrations of spring. It's just off-kilter enough to lighten the melodic drone, and keep things from getting stagnant. (CR)
(Dê o Fora / Nada Nada)

MERCENÁRIAS – "Baú 83-87" LP
More material unearthed from the Brazilian masters of post-punk, courtesy of the splendid Nada Nada Discos. Twenty great quality demo and live tracks, and often even cooler, rawer versions of previously released ones. The live tracks from *Hardcore Rock Night* on side B especially demonstrate the sheer power and genius these women were capable of. Angular beats, massive hooks, enchanting melodies, confrontational harshness—they really could do it all. And the dreamy photo booklet layout reveals just how larger-than-life this band was. Mandatory for both fans and newcomers. (MA)
(Nada Nada)

THE MINUTES – "Moving Target" EP
Pissed off political punk with the look and feel of the late '90s AUS-ROTTEN or early '00s BORN/DEAD scene. What sets it apart, though, are sprinkles of fun throughout this five-song 7". Some of the lyrics and song titles are tongue in cheek, such as "Feeling Stabby" and "Armchair Zealot." There are also also parts with double hits on the snare that give a surfy feel, short guitar solos here and there, and a MISFITS-esque "whoa-oh" part on "Feeling Stabby." **(AJ)**
(Permanent)

MUTANT SCUM – LP
Ambient tribal drums start this LP off, before breaking into galloping, hard rock rhythms that channel HIGH ON FIRE, DAMAD, early COC, and Connecticut crust-core slayers REACT, with a fine combination of southern blues guitar and death metal. The vocals are grimacing, strained, and well in key. A mid-paced guttural banger that, from aesthetics, I expected to be way more goregrind thrash. This LP has catchy diminutive chords, straightforward punk-tinged heavy metal, and excellent dense production. I'm quite impressed. Songs about

wizards, sewers, creatively metaphoric environmental messages, and our subsequent mutations from its demise. Cool '80s toxic horror cover art—this version of the vinyl is green, but like opaque Ninja Turtle green, a vinyl color I had yet to see. (JR)
(Handstand)

MY FAVORITE MARTIAN – "Martian Chronicles, Los Angeles 1990's" CD

Way too poppy. The relentless upbeat beat is killing me. MY FAVORITE MARTIAN is AL BLOCH's post-CONCRETE BLONDE and WOOL band. The music is a blatant reminder of the '90s when every band was trying to and thought they could "make it." It's slick, peppy, and anthemic, with little originality. That this band was from Los Angeles is probably no surprise. Not to mention their harder-edged cover of "Pablo Picasso" really misses the point of the original. (CK)
(Green Monkey)

NEW AGE GROUP – "All Grown Up" EP

This Australian combo plays buzzsaw pop, along the ways of RADIOACTIVITY and PROTEX. The vocals get a little off-key at times, but the overall feel makes up for that. Really looking forward to hearing more from these guys. (RL)
(Paradise Daily)

NIGHT SLAVES – "III" LP

Ten somber, atmospheric epics that rarely clock in at less than four minutes, yet hold my attention the whole way through. A common-enough denominator—though nowhere near the whole picture—might be some of DEPECHE MODE's slowest points, with even more sparse percussion for the most part. A few songs are driven by melancholy organ, with a choir of soulful backups to match, while others by (electric) piano or fuzzy synth. The vocalist has a distinct baritone, and the main instrumentalist, David Kane, started making electronic music in the late '70s, but except for the aforementioned synth, most of the electronics here are part of the ambiance rather than in the foreground. That these intricate and moving songs were created mostly by two people is an even greater accomplishment. (DG)
(Swimming Faith)

OLD FIRM CASUALS – "Holger Danske" LP

This band clearly understood what people would think about a Viking-themed record with runes all over the place, and song titles like "Motherland" and "Thunderbolt," because they've got reassurances in the lyrics and lyrical annotations, and there's a reiteration of their anti-racist stance in the liner notes. I suppose it's an attempt to reclaim old Norse imagery from the fascists. While the record is mostly the kind of catchy street punk/lite Oi! that the OLD FIRM CASUALS are known for, I really fuckin' enjoyed the first track, which has a killer mid-period POISON IDEA feel. There are also some pleasant acoustic interludes, and some Hammond organ layered into the sound on the more epic-sounding tracks that really works. The very straight-faced, near-ballad about a zombie apocalypse that closes the record is unbelievably corny, but on the whole (outside of the very questionable graphic design choices), this record is not terrible. (AU)
(Pirates Press)

PANDEMIX – "In Condemnation" LP

Blending perfect amounts of artsy peace-punk weirdness and brutal aggression, Boston's PANDEMIX deliver a sound that is all at once angry, transgressive, fun, and exciting. This record reminds me why I love punk: it's got some real out-of-the-box peace-punk moments, dissonant chord combos, irresistible melodic hooks, dark creepy riffs, and fast hardcore parts. The track "Synthetix" juxtaposes full-blast hardcore riffs with a punchy, CRASS-like mid-tempo interlude, while "Column of Light" is a slow and scathing screed, with just vocals and guitar. Pretty much something for everyone. Seriously, do not miss out on this! (HB)
(Boss Tuneage / Dirt Cult)

PEOPLE'S TEMPLE PROJECT / SLEEPER WAVE – split LP

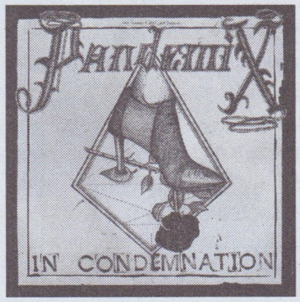
This split LP features two frantic, emotional hardcore bands. PEOPLE'S TEMPLE PROJECT play stuff in the vein of JOSHUA FIT FOR BATTLE or FUNERAL DINER. Sometimes fast, heavy, and slightly spastic; sometimes slow, heavy, and melodic. Sometimes quiet and introspective. On the whole, it's not quite as heavy or fast as those late '90s bands, and it feels like it lacks the hardcore background that those folks had. On the other side, SLEEPER WAVE plays similar stuff, but sometimes leaning more towards that poppy, ALGERNON CADWALLADER, twinkly bro-emo sound, and at other times falling more heavily on the hardcore side of things. They also mix in the quiet meandering parts, but they are far more jazzy. Not groundbreaking, but certainly not bad. (PA)
(Akashita Corp / Dingleberry / IFB / Zegema Beach)

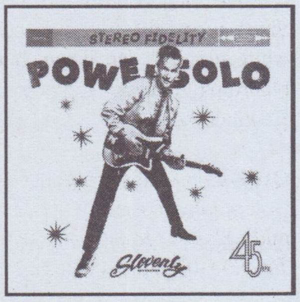
PERRA VIDA – "Célebres Plumíferos" EP

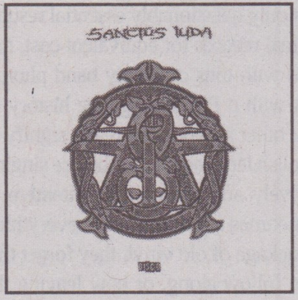
This Peruvian band plays excellent straightforward hardcore punk that most often keeps a 1-2-1-2 pace, with semi-frequent breakdowns and some slower moments, and you get a sense from the vocals that she is putting forth these words because she has no other choice. The drums are varied enough between, and over the course of, each of these five songs, that they all sound distinct, and make their individual marks on this record. The nice bouncy bass tone rounds out their sound well, too. Very excited to see what's next. (DG)
(En Tu Kara)

POSTAGE – "Let Go" flexi

This one is definitely in the catchy pop punk category, but it's delivered in a way that isn't overly sticky. Imagine a pop punk record from a band that didn't have aspirations to make it in the mainstream world. That may sound like a weird thing to say, but I think that sort of captures it. It's isn't over-produced or have the vocals on top of everything else. Good job, guys. (KK)
(Paper and Plastick)







POWERSOLO – "Backstab / Nedtur"

The second TAV FALCO-sounding band I am reviewing this month. I understand it. He's got a cool style. This one is from Denmark. Two songs of garage-y rock with a lo-fi dirty attitude. The A-side "Back Stab" utilizes "motherfucker" quite a bit. "Nedtur" is in Danish, so it could also be using that word for all I know. Even still, the songs are catchy and edgy. Interesting stuff. (CK)
(Slovenly)

THE PREMONITIONS – "Give Back What You Take / Sun Goes Down"

Those gosh darn '60s, lemme tell ya! The PREMONITIONS kick a fair amount of rear end on this lil' jukebox jewel: the A-side's a total workout, obviously indebted to PRETTY THINGS or CHANTS R&B, while the flip's a fuzzier, mod-leaning hipshaker with prominent organ grindin'. Really head & shoulders above the overt retro-raunch that's hit *MRR* in recent months, so good on 'em for not sucking the dog. Worth a lookie-loo for all you daddy-o-diddley dude-a-bopper turkey dorks! (MC)
(Outro)

PRIORS – "Call for You" EP

Montreal buzz'n'scuzz. The title track recalls the streamlined charge of the POINTS: totally breakneck, modern and impressive. The tunes on the flip twitch a bit more, particularly "Swelter," which may be the crown jewel of the affair. No subtlety to be seen, just pure drive. A nice jaunt for the chemically-enhanced in our readership. (MC)
(Slovenly)

THE PUGILISTICS – "Another Round!" EP

The PUGILISITICS from Arizona follow their 2005 debut EP with a new four-song bout of tenacious old-school hardcore threaded around a melodic core. The songs vary in attack from mid-tempo to fast singalong anthem to ELVIS or MISFITS-inspired howlers with solid, pro musicianship weathering the twists, but patchy vocal delivery never quite finding its footing between or sometimes even within the songs. "Reflections" pounds with harshly barked and yelped vocals; "The Scene," with it's its sung choruses, comes the closest in feel to a classic old punk anthem calling for scene participation; "Red Flag" is a mid-tempo boiler that brings to mind HVY DRT in the quirky line-to-line changes in the singing; "Stalkin" is a horror-punk crooner akin to GHOUL SQUAD or CALABRESE. No lyrics are provided, Winston Smith-inspired type cover collage, numbered and limited to 100 on white vinyl. A fun listen, but a few more rounds tightening up the recording, delivery, and presentation might deliver an actual KO. (KS)
(Frankendoom)

QUARANTINE – "Regressive Thoughts" 2xLP

A worthwhile compendium of the complete recorded output of this mid-'90s Glasgow trio, including the *Automatic Negative Thoughts* LP, *Junction 10* EP, and assorted compilation tracks, compiled by longtime stalwart label of the Polish scene Nikt Nic Nie Wie. The band's music spanned from more direct, driving hardcore type songs, to more melodic, almost JAWBREAKER influenced sounds, but always with passionate, angry vocals, and lyrics that were both critical and hopeful at the same time. Much like ACTIVE MINDS, who I reviewed earlier this issue, the members of QUARANTINE are punk lifers who remain as dedicated to DIY punk and hardcore now as they were then. It's great to revisit this material that may have been overlooked by some at the time. (AM)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

REDNESS – "Killer B's" 12"

Haha, I heard this was in my box, and was wondering what was up. I've got the rare-o 7" from this mysterious, late '70s Cleveland UBU-adjacent outfit. Artpunk with the emphasis on the *art*. I was hoping for some extra material, but it seems it's a straight reissue of the six-song 7" as a 45 RPM 12". Presumably, the "label" (who put this out?!) couldn't find a pressing plant willing to put, what, ten minutes on a side? A pretty incredible artifact, and there's even a couple pure aggro punkers, albeit with electronics (and trombone!!), and plenty of disgruntled '70s Ohio basement electronic shenanigans. Maybe I can finally get big bucks for my spare EP. This one's a killer, definitely one of the more fucked, abrasive US DIY records. (GB)
(NON)

KRISTEN RESNING – "Tillbaka Till Wittenberg" EP

Swedish prim-punk! *Tillbaka Till Wittenberg* enshrines fine trash without falling prey to misguided blues attempts, making this already a winner by Euro g-word punk standards. Six crunchy barbs, nary a dud in sight, including some vague swipe at JACK AND THE RIPPERS. I've thoroughly enjoyed every Levande Begravd release I've encountered, this being no exception. Ace crap for your bombed brain. (MC)
(Levande Begravd)

SANCTUS IUDA – "Disco" 2xLP

A 30-song semi-discography of Poland's SANCTUS IUDA's ("Saint Jude," the patron saint of lost causes) recordings from 1995–1998. Their sound is grounded in thick, mid-tempo Euro-squat crust like HIATUS or FLEAS AND LICE, with oversaturated guitar distortion capped with caustic, berating vocals. The tempo occasionally quickens to speedy hardcore bursts, while their later recordings slow to a crushing churn, but the remastering here hammers a nice consistency to the variance. Sides A and B chronologically present their split EPs with the SARCASM, SHARPEVILLE, REGENERACION, and DOG ON A ROPE, along with the otherwise-unreleased material (mostly live songs and covers) from their 1996 *ABC* cassette. Side C has darker, sludgy unreleased demos for an aborted second LP, that treads the slower AMEBIX/NEUROSIS/GODFLESH gloom, twisting around the thrash blasting. These four tracks are pretty hot, as they edge on that late '90s pocket of experimental, heavy bleakness, with caustic vocals raking over the top of everything. Side D is an unreleased 1996 semi-techno remix of songs from their first LP (the only recording not included here), by a member of SARCASM, that weaves in samples and

deconstructs everything to interesting but only questionably essential results. While you could pick up the band's original records for equivalent cost, this collection is packaged in a nice gatefold with tons of grainy band photos, record covers, and an extensive booklet with a Polish-language history of the band—but is oddly deficit of lyrics or other artwork that really signify to people unfamiliar with the band, or the Polish language, what they're singing about. Polish labels have been impressively and wonderfully attentive to documenting their scene history, but sometimes as they upgrade everything from old cassettes or make an efficient package of old vinyl, they forget that not everyone has always been around to follow along, or how leaving the lyrics and meaning by the wayside works on the assumption that everyone still understands the impact of those lyrics, and subscribes to those ideas meaning—and the state of the world in 2019 underlines that the ideas still need to be hammered home. (KS)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

SLANT – "Vain Attempt" EP

Given that members of SLANT play in South Korea's SCUMRAID, you would expect their first EP to be drenched in noise. You'd also be wrong. This is a pretty straightforward hardcore outfit that stands out from the pack of USHC revivalists due to both vocalist Yeji's harsh, raw shouting and the band's strong attention to detail. Songs like "Scorn" are more dynamic and punishing than a lot of bands mining the same territory. Fucking great. (JD)
(Iron Lung)

THE SLEEPING AIDES AND RAZORBLADES – "Parallax View" 10"

This Japanese power pop punk band has been around for five years or so. I can only assume they got their name from the EXPLODING HEARTS song. New wave power-pop with keyboard in the mix at times. Vocals in English, the songs here are pretty solid along the ways of later BUZZCOCKS as well as CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH vocally. Fans of Snuffy Smiles type pop punk will like this. (RL)
(Debauch Mood)

ŚMIERĆ – "Godzina Pusta" 12"

This is a project created by Polish punks living in Sweden who wanted to pay tribute to the works of Polish poets and bands. While I'm not well-versed in most Polish arts (which is a shame), I can still find something to appreciate in the thoughtfulness given to presenting the lyrics and explaining a bit where they come from. While I don't understand the lyrics, which are in Polish, the notes about their sources, such as the works of DEZERTER, HOMOMILITIA, and poet Adam Zagajewski, are in English. That being said, I feel less inspired by the band, with its pretty straightforward punk riffing and melodic vocals. The vocals by Ninka are often left to carry the melodic weight of the band, and they often do not feel like enough to help them stand out from the herd. (JD)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

SOLOIST ANTI POP TOTALIZATION – LP

In the 432nd and final issue of this magazine, we are still asking the age old question: "what is punk?" Is it the chaos punk at the bar drinking corporate beer while high-fiving his friends and not giving a flying fuck that the serial rapist still comes to their shows? Is it lesbian separatists who attach contact mics to filing cabinets while they saw them in half? Is it historical reenactments of D-beat cassettes from 1982? Is it a guy from Japan making minimalist synth in his room? We may never have a definitive answer that will please everyone, and this synth guy probably doesn't even consider himself a punk, but he sent his record to a punk magazine so here we are. *Anyway*, SOLOIST ANTI POP TOTALIZATION is completely synth and noise based, recalling the early industrial era, when everyone was still trying to figure out their sound with limited technical capabilities. S.A.P.T. appears to draw influences from DENDO MARIONETTE, PUBLIC IMAGE LTD and CABARET VOLTAIRE with almost monotone, barely affected vocals. Rarely abrasive, but it has a good, harsh beat. Is it punk though? Ask me if I care. (GH)
(Debauch Mood)

SOMEDAY BEST – "III (THE EMPRESS)" EP

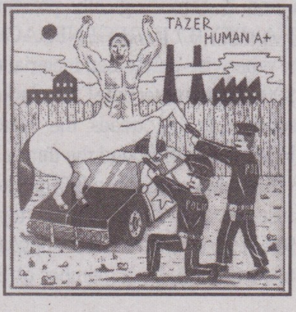
This is a young emo pop punk band from South Dakota. Sound wise, this is along the ways of GET UP KIDS and TAKING BACK SUNDAY. The vocals are pretty off on this three-song release. Like way off, in a hitting-lots-of-bad-notes way. Oh well. (RL)
(Rabbit Rabbit)

TAZER – "Human A+" EP

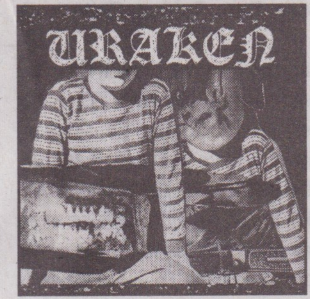
The cover art is somewhere between prison art and high school drawing competition: a centaur straddles a police car as two puzzled police officers point their weapons his way. This disc contains some choice dollar store guitar'n'keyboard punk, with nods to *KBD* klassics. Sneering Danish synth punk that errs on the side of the sick with songs about mechanical human attributes from the womb to the tomb. If you are a Florida's Dying mailorder freak, this is definitely callin' your number. (LG)
(Levande Begravd)

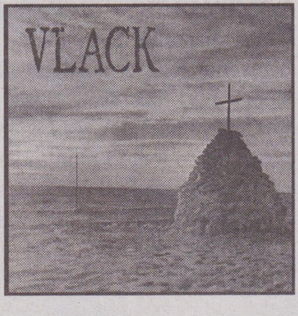
THETAN – "Abysmal" LP

Life ain't easy for a two-piece band (I should know, I hung out with POPULATION REDUCTION for like a decade), but Nashville's THETAN are absolutely making it work. This bass-and-drums duo offer up a grip of gnarly powerviolence-influenced tracks that alternately rage and sludge, highlighted by some remarkably nimble bass playing. The lyrics are super bleak, even for the genre—which is a plus in my book—and that desperation is conveyed very effectively by the frenzied vocals (Dino from DYSTOPIA-esque at times). It's worth noting that this outer rim of this LP is etched, which is very cool indeed. (AU)
(Anti Corp)



RECORDS





THIS MEANS WAR – "Heart Strings" LP
They look like skinheads. They sound like (early) FALLOUT BOY meets AVAIL, and then near the end of the first side, there's one really exceptional track that sounds like the DARKNESS or JET (it's called "Off With Their Heads" and I'm not gonna lie: I like it). Slick, polished, professional, radio-friendly alt-rock. (WN)
(Pirates Press / Demons Run Amok)

TICS – "Agnostic Funk" 12"
Eight tracks of jagged funk-punk from this Cologne group. Quirky, stop-start rhythms plus wandering bass-lines punctuated by hyper-speed funk guitar form the foundation for these terse, varied ruminations on modern society. The songwriting is complex, the playing polished and accomplished—a potent mix of FIREHOSE, TALKING HEADS, and BADGEWEARER. Fantastic stuff. (AM)
(Tomaten Platten)

THE WORLD IS A VAMPIRE / TORTURE GARDEN – split EP
Here are two bands out of New Orleans that want to fuck up your reality. TORTURE GARDEN brings some deadly D-beat crust that is both furious and mournfully melodic. They keep it extra heavy, with just the right amount of driving, epic crust. THE WORLD IS A VAMPIRE seems like a band that I would not like at all. First, I hate that song they're named after. Second, this sounds like some goths trying to play freaked-out, blackened D-beat. It all just seems like it should be an awful disaster, but somehow it all works, and this band is fucking awesome! If you're a grim weirdo, then check this out. (BA)
(IFB / Feast of Tentacles)

TRASHLEY – "Joyful Angst" LP
Electroclash dance punk from Paris that keeps the guitar, bass, and drums high in the mix, and doesn't stray too far into the electro end of the spectrum. Impassioned group vocals and melodic riffs bring to mind the chaos of early '00s synth punk. Lyrics in English that sound cool, but don't totally make sense. Probably pretty incredible to see this band live, if they keep up even half the energy level of this recording. (HB)
(Emergence / Gurdulu / Mass Prod)

URAKEN – "Perfection" EP
France's URAKEN serve up a heavy mix of hardcore, crust, sludge, and powerviolence that is reminiscent of some of Southern Lord's faster acts on this reissue of their 2017 demo. While none of their style is particularly new or innovative (anyone else remember when it seemed like every other band was crust-infused?) it is varied and punishing enough to avoid a monotonous listen. (JD)
(Dirty Guys Rock / Don't Trust The Hype / Emergence)

UŽ JSME DOMA – "MEdley YOUdley – SEStrih BRAtrih" LP
Long running Czech punk/prog band who started when their region was still under communist rule in the '80s. This live LP is a celebration of their 30th anniversary, and spans much of their career, bringing back past members to play on stage with them. It sounds like a party, with so much instrumentation (the usual standbys as well as flute, piano and sax) and gang vocals. It took me a minute to get into this, but I like it. There are traces of early anarcho-punk (in the vein of DE KIFT and the EX), prog-rock, weirdo shit (like the RESIDENTS, BEEFHEART) and so much eastern European punk that I am not properly schooled on. The whole thing is played rapidfire with no breaks between songs and no space to catch your breath. It's entirely impressive for a bunch of old farts, and it sounds like such a fun show. Consider me impressed. (GH)
(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

VIDRO – "Allt Brinner" 12"
This is the last piece of wax that I will review for the last regular print issue of *MRR*, and it is pure fukkn fire. Biting and fierce Swedish hardcore punk with terrifying female lead vocals, and an affected flanged guitar that borders on destruction for the entire recording—especially the leads. VIDRO are just pure ferocity: urgent, desperate hardcore punk that doesn't really sound like anything except themselves, and there is an approach to the (de)construction and presentation of their songs that is enviable. To take a formula that is known and manipulate and manage it until it becomes your own is in itself an art form, but if you also create a total motherfukkr of a record in the process, then you have my respect. So I finish my last review just wanting more, as it should be. (WN)
(Kink)

VLACK – "The Way of the Cross" CD
This one is hard to nail down. VLACK are big and "rock" sounding, but there's a dark vibe that reminds me of under the radar monsters like ANGST or MY DAD IS DEAD—even while they are playing what is basically '80s college alt-rock. I spent the entire disc trying to figure out how to categorize it, and that says a lot on its own, right? (WN)
(Ripper Records)

WEICHE – "Verspercher / Rückzieher"
Sludge with shoegaze-y tendencies. Shrieked vocals, and two or three riffs on the whole record. I liked the parts that emulated MY BLOODY VALENTINE a lot more than the parts that emulated EYEHATEGOD, but they were too few and far between. Kinda tedious overall. (AU)
(Dingleberry / Ecocentric / Kink / Wooaaargh)

THE WHITTINGTONS – "Human Beingz" EP
Recorded in 2016, released in 2017, reaching *Maximum Rocknroll* in 2019, the '90s band the WHITTINGTONS are back together or finally got off their asses to make some new music. It's punk with a hard rock edge. Aggro, macho, and trashy, but catchy. If only they could resist the guitar solos. Regardless, I like it. (CK)
(Ken Rock)

WIMPY DICKS – “Kill Chain” CD

This band has been around since 1980, with the singer/bass player being the lone original member. From San Luis Obispo, they play sloppy mid-’80s skate punk, a lot like the wave that included the FACTION and JFA. Although I give them props for sticking to this genre for so long, I didn’t like this at all. The vocals try to jam in too many words to fit the music, and the uneven playing and song mixes don’t help. Admittedly, I’ve never been a skate punk guy, but I do like it when it’s done right. (RL)

(Bopp N’ Skin)

WLOCHATY – 2xLP

Poland’s WLOCHATY (“Hairy”) originally released this nineteen-song recording on cassette in 1994, sold an astounding 20,000 copies, and then re-released it on vinyl in 1995 as a condensed fifteen-song LP, with an added saxophone track (?) in the mixes of the songs. This deluxe, double LP version presents the original recording—without sax—with strong remastering, deluxe presentation in a gatefold sleeve, and lyrics in English and Polish. As a debut record recorded 25 years ago, this long-standing veteran band was still defining their sound, but this classic is such a expansion on the genetic blueprints of the crucial elements of Polish hardcore: pogo-ready punk stormers, odd experimental avant garde turns, unexpected reggae influences, melodic acoustic passages, brute cold wave harshness, and scathing hardcore as their vocalists ramble and shout poetic, thoughtful political lyrics. Tandem choruses by male and female backup screamers punctuate and stoke the chaos. Engaging, challenging, and ultimately rewarding—a fantastic re-release! (KS)

(Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

ZERO GAIN – “Modern Blues. The First Five Years.” CD

Killer working class French punk rock. Hints of LEATHERFACE and EA80 peek through this 24-song collection (from releases spanning the last five years, as the title suggests), while ZERO GAIN settle into their own distinct style. The more I listen to these tracks, them more the band sinks into me, and there’s something wholly refreshing about hearing a band construct important sounding *songs*. Listen to “Runnin’ On Empty” (not a cover), and you’re taken back a decade or more, not in the sound, but in the feel of bands like BORN DEAD ICONS, J CHURCH or LA FRACTION—they punched you in the gut and they stuck with you. They were a new band to me before this disc, but I’m totally sold. (WN)

(Nineteen Something)

V/A – “Peace, Unity, Noise And Having Fun: Tekken Tribute & Remixes” LP

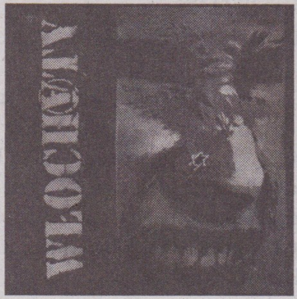
So this compilation LP is apparently a tribute to the French fastcore band TEKKEN. I regret to announce I was not familiar with TEKKEN the band, but it looks as though they were around in the late ’90s and early ’00s, and with some video research, I have realized that they were pretty good! If you like to blast off with CHARLES BRONSON, SPAZZ, DAMNABLE EXCITE ZOMBIES, AGATHOCLES, or even FANTOMAS, or any bands that were forming when fastcore was really breaking into its stride, I have this recommendation for you! There’s also some really bizarre MIDI carnival music, which I must admit I am entertained by, if not perplexed. (JR)

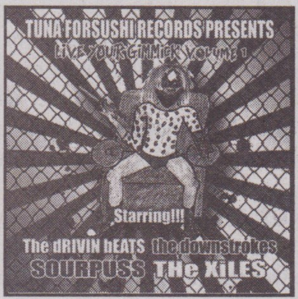
(The Age Of Venus / Alchimia / Amertume / Arabesque / Arrache Toi Un Oeil! /Aspidistra / The Attack Of The Degoulinous Lombricus / Attila Tralala / Au Fond De L’Impasse / Bad Card / Bad Karma / Bande Noire / Bonanza / BoomBoom / Boum Coeur / Brainless / BTK / Burning Emptiness / B.U.R.T. /Buzz Off / Chimeres / Coexistence Obscure / Concert Ou Pizza / Corn Dog / Crapoulet / Creepozoïd Productions / Deviance / Diabolik / Donnez-Moi Du Feu / Echo Canyon / Emergence / Entreprises Marcel Daron / Eternel Détour / Et Mon Cul C’est Du Tofu? / Exutoire / Fake Inc. / Fla-kultur / Friday Feeling / Gestalt / Guerilla Asso / Happy Dick Milk / High Hopes / I Feel Good / Jackhuze / J’appelle Les Flics / Kawaii / Kid For Life / Label Brasseuse / Langt Ner / Les Disques de Géraldine / Les Ditions de L’ascenseur Mou / Los Discos de la Bestia / Lubic / Maison Acid / Major Threat / Molaire Industries / Mr Marcaille / Murder / Nagawika / New Wave / No Reason / No Way Asso / Offside / One Person Party Prodz / Orange Juice / Overcome / Palmipède Graphics / Paradoxicomanie / Paska / Peace & Noise / Perspective / Place St Anne / Positively Negative / Pouna Disques / Puzzle / Radar Swarm / Rock’N’Roll Masturbation / Rotten Eggs Smell Terrible / Rudeboi / Ruin Co / 75 / Shinya / Slow Death / Small Budget / Solitude / Subversive Ways / Suicide Commercial / Tocsin / Tomaturj / Trahison / 213 /Unhurt / Up Front / Uproar For Veneration / Up To Eleven / Varius Multiplex Multiformis / Waiting For An Angel / Wee Wee / Zone Onze)

V/A – “Tuna Forsushi Records Presents: Live Your Gimmick Vol. 1” CD

Four-band comp that goes like this: 1) The DRIVIN’ BEATS play early ’80s sounding late punk vs. early college radio rock and/or legit new wave rock ’n’ roll; 2) SOURPUSS sound like if the SPITS were trying to sound tough and/or offensive—also if the SPITS were actually a bad grunge band; 3) The DOWNSTROKES are classic ’80s Midwest punk; 4) The XILES are like the SEX PISTOLS if Johnny’s exaggerated accent kept falling out of line and / or any heartfelt, determined bar punk band in any town in North America—and “American Nightmare” is the best song on this comp. That is all. (WN)

(Tuna Forsushi)

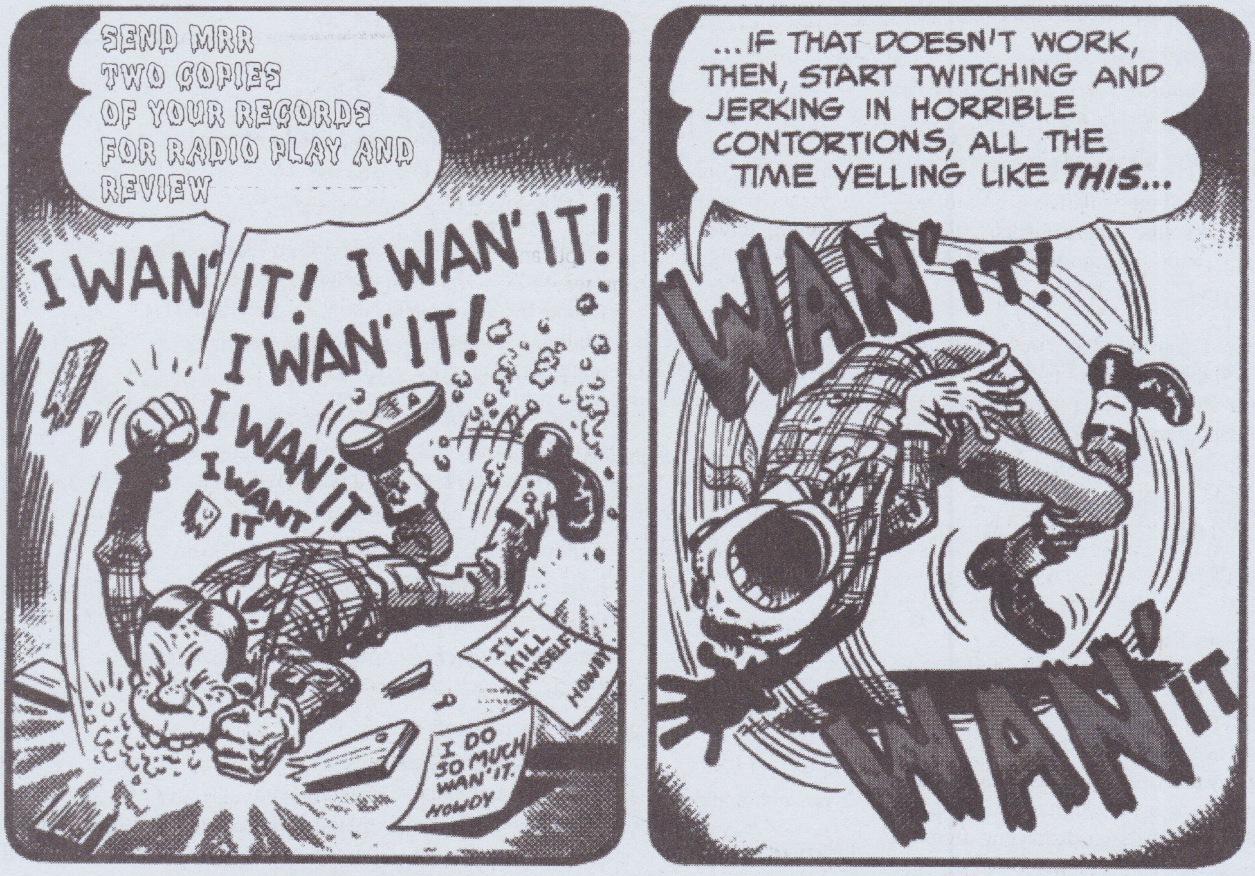




CONTACTS

Acouphènes!: acouphenesradioshow@gmail.com
Agoraphobic Record Syndicate: 719 John St, Listowel, ON N4W 1B6, CANADA
Akashita Corp: akashitacorporation.bandcamp.com
Almost Ready: almostreadyrecords.com; PO Box 310376, Brooklyn, NY 11231
Annihilate: cronanderpunx@gmail.com
Anti-Corp: anticorporatemusic.com
Greg Antista and the Lonely Streets: facebook.com/gregantistaandthelonelystreets
Arkam: arkamrecords.net
Bigoût: bigoutrecords.com
Black Cat Manor: blackcatmanorband.com
Black Konflik: blacxkonflik.blogspot.my
Bopp N' Skin: wimpydicks.wordpress.com
Boss Tuneage: bosstuneage.bigcartel.com
Calico: calicords.wix.com/calico; calicords@yahoo.com
Crapoulet: crapoulet.fr
Dama Da Noite: damadanoitediscos@gmail.com
Debauch Mood: debauchmood.blogspot.com; debauchmood@gmail.com
Demons Run Amok Entertainment: demonsrunamok.de; Friedhofstrasse 8, 77790 Steinhach, GERMANY
Dê o Fora!: deofora.bandcamp.com
Deviance: deviancerecords.com; 17 Rue de la Mortagne, 88700 Roville-aux-Chênes, FRANCE
Dingleberry: dingleberry@web.de
Dirt Cult: dirtcultrecords.bandcamp.com
Dirty Guys Rock: dirtyguysrock.com
Discos Enfermos: discosenfermos@gmail.com
Don't Trust The Hype: dtth.bandcamp.com
Edge: edgerecords.hu
Ecocentric: ecocentricrecords.com
Emergence: emergencerecords.blogspot.fr; vincemergence@hotmail.com; 29 Rue de le Nostre, 76000 Rouen, FRANCE
The Empty Bottles: emptybottles.be
En Tu Kara: entukararecords@gmail.com
Flail: flailrecords.bandcamp.com; flailrecords@gmail.com
Feast of Tentacles: feastoftentacles.com; feastoftentacles@hotmail.com
Feel It: feelitrecordshop.com
Goner: goner-records.com
Green Monkey: greenmonkeyrecords.com
Gurdulu: gurdulu.org
H-Bomb: PO Box 15372, Columbus, OH 43215
Handstand: handstandrecords.com
IFB: ifbrecords.com
Iron Lung: lifeironlungdeath.blogspot.com
Jungle Khôl: turboslimane@hotmail.fr
Ken Rock: kensplastic@hotmail.com
Keponteam: keponteam.org
Kink: kink-records.de
Kitschy Spirit: kitschyspirit.com
KLVR: klvrrecords.bandcamp.com; klvrrecords@hotmail.com
La Société Pue Prod: lasocietepue@singularity.fr
Levande Begravd: levandebegravd1@gmail.com
Lógica Ciega: logicaciega.bandcamp.com; logicaciega@gmail.com
Loner Cult: nico.vuur@gmail.com
Love Mazout: lovemazout.wordpress.com
Lummox: lummoxrecords.com
Market Square: marketsquarerecordings.bandcamp.com
Masapunk: masapunk.org
Mass Prod: massprod.com
The Minutes: theminutesnyc.bandcamp.com; theminutesnyc@gmail.com
Nada Nada: nadanadadiscos.com
Nadine: nadinerecords.com; nadine.records@gmail.com
Nikt Nic Nie Wie: nnnw.bandcamp.com; PO Box 53, 34-400 Nowy Targ, POLAND
Nineteen Something: nineteensomething.fr
Outro: outrorecords.com; outrorecords.us@gmail.com
Paper + Plastick: paperandplastick.com
Paradise Daily: paradisedaily.bandcamp.com; paradisedailyrecords@gmail.com
Pirates Press: piratespressrecords.com
Rabbit Rabbit: somedaybest.bandcamp.com
Ribé: riberecords.limitedrun.com
Ripper: vlack.bandcamp.com
Running in Place: runningnplcrecs@gmail.com
Slope: sloperecords.com
Slovenly: slovenly.com
Snappy Little Numbers: snappylittlenumbers.com; snappylittlenumbers@gmail.com
Specialist Subject: specialistsubject.bandcamp.com
Spit It Out: spit.it.out.recs@gmail.com
Square of Opposition: squareofopposition.limitedrun.com; square_of_opposition@hotmail.com
Stencil Trash: stenciltrashmailorder.de
Stupid Bag: stupidbagrecords@gmail.com
SuperFi: superfirecords@gmail.com
Swimming Faith: swimmingfaithrecords.com
Tankcrimes: tankcrimes.com
Tomaten Platten: tomatenplatten.com
Tuna Forsushi: facebook.com/tunaforsushirecords
Urban Sleep: urbansleepdiscs.web.fc2.com
Warthog Speak/Vague Absolutes: warthogspeak.com
Wee Wee: weewee.bigcartel.com
WOOAAARGH: wooaaargh.com
World Gone Mad: worldgonemad.bigcartel.com
Zegema Beach: zegemabeachrecords.com
Zone Onze: zoneonzerecords.com

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL STILL WANTS YOUR RECORDS!



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL LIVES ON IN MRR RADIO, ONLINE REVIEWS, AND THE UNPARALLELED MRR RECORD COLLECTION! PLEASE SEND US TWO COPIES OF YOUR LP OR 7" TO ENSURE YOUR RECORD IS COVERED, PLAYED AND ARCHIVED WITH THE MOST DEFINITIVE RESOURCE FOR INTERNATIONAL DIY PUNK...

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
PO BOX 3852
OAKLAND, CA 94609

(SEND YOUR TAPES AND CDS TOO!)

For review and radio play consideration, please send two copies of vinyl or one copy of CD-only or cassette-only releases to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609, USA. We will review everything that falls within our areas of coverage: independent punk, garage, and hardcore. This means no major labels or labels that are exclusively distributed by major-owned distributors. We reserve the right to reject releases on the basis of content. Music without vocals or drums will not be considered. Every record that is reviewed is added to our archive, the largest collection of punk records in the world. Be sure to include contact information in your package so we can get in touch with any questions we might have. Thank you!

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(EY) Erin Yanke
(GH) Greg Harvester
(JR) Jason Ryan

(MA) Matt Badenhop
(PC) Paul Curran
(WN) Robert Collins

ALMATAHA – *Kill the Leaders* – Denver hardcore punk with some spiky hair, a bald guy, and long-winded political screed like AUS ROTTEN and THE PIST. The vocalist has a rageful and direct delivery akin to Jerry A. Song titles like "Nazi Fucks," "Macho Dickhead" (with the chorus, *"Straightedge jocks fuck you!"*), and "Kill the Leaders" make their message abundantly clear. As far as I can tell, the band name translates to "available" in Arabic, and the majority of the members look to be quite young. (MA) (9-song CD-R, lyrics not included, almataha.bandcamp.com)

ALTERNATIVE FAKTEN – *Glotze* – Meaty and melodic sounds courtesy of a gruff metal/hardcore punk band from Germany. (WN) (11-song CD-R, lyrics included, alternative-fakten.com)

ANTIBODIES – *LP 2018* – I guess an LP can be a tape? Had to look it up...semantics aside ANTIBODIES are from Charlottetown, Canada, and mostly have an awesome sound, with bouncy and fast with a perfectly distorted guitar and a fat thwacking snare. The heavy vocal delay/reverb is so distracting from the super energetic instrumentation, though. Like, this fucking pedal is just infinitely echoing over all these good punk songs. Maybe you'll like it? I mean, it's really great but if the singer wasn't hiding behind these effects it would be one of my faves for the month. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, brettsanderson902@gmail.com, antibodieschtn.bandcamp.com)

ATTA / RAIVA – *A Pathetic Image of How It All Could Have Been* split – Brutal and fierce melodic Eurocrust from ATTA, notable for their speed and intensity (thanks for the blast beats, punks). Slightly more (scr)e(a)mo approach from RAIVA, landing them somewhere in the NOW DENIAL camp but with a notably abrasive guitar and a discordant approach to song construction. Extremely powerful split from two German bands, released for their tour together. (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, attadiy.bandcamp.com, raiva666band.bandcamp.com)

BASK – *Cask* – Houston poppy punk with an emphasis on the pop and '90s indie rock. The clear enunciation and poppiness of this has me sometimes thinking of WEEZER, which is unfortunate because I think there is a lot more bubbling under the surface. The raw four track recording adds more depth and character than that lazy comparison would lead you to believe. There is a fifteen minute instrumental jam at the end that shows another, mellower side to the band. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, poisonmoonrecords.com)

BEEP TEST – *Laugh Track* – Aggro synth punk from Montreal with a real '80s vibe like THE NORMAL and that ilk of art damage bleep bloop action but with real drums a guitars. Makes you wanna dance and smash and vomit and yell at your mom and dad cuz they'll never understand!! Sounds like a one-dude project and this dude is constantly enraged about everything! For instance, his parents bought him a guitar when he was a kid and he's mad about it! Still! Lullabies for the angular and angry. (PC) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, beeptest.bandcamp.com)

THE BODY – *Oh God Who Avenges, Shine Forth. Rise Up, Judge of the Earth; Pay Back to the Proud What They Deserve* – The sound of utter devastation. Everything, everywhere failing all at once. The sound of the world graciously turning in on itself to immolate all of man's creations so that we can finally know the true freedom of shedding this mortal coil. Or two big dudes find a TR-808 in the trash and try to recreate NINE INCH NAILS's *Pretty Hate Machine* but fail miserably while accidentally creating genius. I will bet money that there is a fart sample on here. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, ABWTB.storenvy.com)

BODY BREAK – Freaky, creepy crawl-style basement hardcore from Montreal that sounds like it would lay a huge turd across the face of any posers in its path. Each song lays such a heavy, ugly vibe down. Their singer sounds so disgusted by this fucking world. This is such a solid demo and I'm excited to hear more from this band. *"Lotta rad bands but no life changers."* Don't I know it. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, bodybreakmtl.bandcamp.com, c/o Connor Crash, 4315 St. Urbain St., Montreal, QC, CANADA, H2W 1V6)

BOY(MOUTH) – *33 Sounds From Images* – This sounds like a dentist's drill somehow recorded through a Texas Instruments voice modulator and then pitch shifted into a vocoder. (GH) (1-song mini-CD-R, lyrics not included, boymouth.bandcamp.com, c/o Dan Bale, 1333 NE 71st Ave., Portland, OR 97213)

BOY(MOUTH) – *Hot Bitches Drinking Gasoline* – Minimalist noise and industrial drone with vocals ranging from free range singing to all-out rage. Stabs at room-clearing noise baths and flirtations with dungeon synth are peppered throughout. (GH) (12-song CD-R, lyrics not included, boymouth.bandcamp.com, c/o Dan Bale, 1333 NE 71st Ave., Portland, OR 97213)

THE CARRINGTONS – A pop punk band that's less bubblegum and more fully-rounded, melodic, and catchy. If they were around fifteen years ago, they probably would have been on Dirtnap. Good guitar sound, and the vocals are present but not dominating. I like the ballads less than the rockers, but it's not like the quality dropped or anything. "Night Feeder" is my hit. (EY) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, the-carringtons.bandcamp.com)

CHRIST VIOLENCE – Dense, chaotic, and painful industrial throbbing amid a backdrop of harsh noise with self-loathing vocals that are surprisingly not buried in the mix. Though it's only three songs, CHRIST VIOLENCE truly sets a catastrophic and paranoid tone in about six minutes of music. Short and to the point. (GH) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, christviolence.bandcamp.com)

CITIZENS AGAINST PEOPLE – *Stay Pissed* – You know the feeling that you already know a band inside and out as soon as you hear the first track? That's how CITIZENS

AGAINST PEOPLE hit me—gruff and melodic hardcore punk pushing damn near all of my buttons. This is every shitpunk band from the basement '90s permanently ingrained in my brain, and the *"whoooaaa–oooh, nazi scum!"* is pretty unfuckwithable. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, citizensagainstpeople.bandcamp.com)

COMBAT SHOCK – *Sacrifice* – Ooooooof, this shit is just deadly. Russian crossover thrash delivered at maximum speed and with unreal intensity. I'm kinda speechless here, COMBAT SHOCK are jaw-droppingly intense, freakishly intense…and to think that kids in North America wet their pants over POWER TRIP (no offense) when this shit exists in the world. I just don't know what to say. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, combatshockmetal.bandcamp.com)

CONCRETE LAWN – Fuzzed out Australian punk that somehow sounds like AVENGERS or SADO–NATION. Dripping late '70s verve all over this modern hardcore banger is a good ass move. Swings like fukk, screams like punk. CONCRETE LAWN drop an urgent and commanding demo, and I'm anxious to see what happens next. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, concretelawn.bandcamp.com)

COP/OUT – *Demo* – Ultra-gruff and speedy pop punk from NYC. Tonally hardcore but poppy in chord progression. Sounds more akin to something from "the region" or '90s East Bay that I can't quite pinpoint. (MA) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, copoutpunx.bandcamp.com)

CRAMMM – *Live 2018* – I don't know...I keep waiting for this thing to do something but it doesn't. Dreary garage sounds with unnecessarily affected vocals...just kinda sounds like one long freakout psych jam with a drum-heavy board mix. (WN) (?-song cassette, lyrics not included, brainplanrecords.com)

DEEP TISSUE – DEEP TISSUE are awesome on this solid tape. Traditional punk instrumentation here with mid-tempo songs. There's strong experimentation with the guitar going on, as well as the basic tracks. "Delirium" has the most interesting guitar sound, which is present but always weaving around too. Ephemeral and solid. Difficult to achieve. They're cousins of bands like SILENT ERA or a calmer TYRADES. (EY) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, deeptissue666.bandcamp.com)

DENIM CASKET – Filthy B/D/V PV. This doesn't sound like it was recorded in a massive concrete culvert. It sounds like it *is* a massive concrete culvert rolling you over. Their approach to the "slow" end of the powerviolence spectrum is pretty fucking overwhelming, punctuated by awkward bursts of all out grind. Sometimes less is more, and there are very few ingredients here. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, denimcasket.bandcamp.com)

DETESTO – *The Stench of Death* – Mid-paced raw crust from São Paulo. Simple, pissed, and good. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, wallas_constantino@hotmail.com)

DIFFICULT – New band featuring some of the Bay Area's finest. The thick rhythm section is faithfully and unmistakably STREET EATERS, and Joan slathers a smooth layer of melody with her Flying V. The closer "Nursemaid" disrupts the previously set vibe with a chopped rhythm and *"do you spit or swallow…"* Overall, it's "in a mood" punk but with a sharp edge, like ARCTIC FLOWERS on a grungy but sassy day. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, nervousintent.com)

DIFFIDENCE – *Your Manager Says for You to Shut Up* – East Bay Peace Punk returns with DIFFIDENCE. The war they're singing about is not the big bomb-dropping one but for dignity and humanity under capitalism and colonialism. Musically mid-tempo, with the rhythm section steady and driving while the vocals (shared by all three members) and guitar add the variety, pep, and attack. There are post-punk influences in this, but DIFFIDENCE is clearly responding to our modern times and what they're living. That is a punk band. (EY) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, diffidenceoakland.bandcamp.com)

THE DISTRACTIONS – Fast and standard thick pop punk. They have the kind of pop punk singing with held out notes, and there may be too many words for the vocalist to keep up with all the time. But then, the fans sing along and it all works out. They drop FACE TO FACE as an influence; I'd add BOUNCING SOULS. (EY) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thedistractionspunk.bandcamp.com)

DOUBLE FISTED – Basic, budget BargainTown guitar riffs played super fast with gruff vocals about shitty jobs and getting stabbed in the back. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, doublefisted.bandcamp.com)

FEEDBAG – *A Star is Born: Barbarian Streisand Sings Most Excellent Carpal Funk LP* – Wow. As someone who absolutely adores a terrible recording, I have to say that this is above and beyond. Sometimes, the vocals drown out everything. Other times, a soloing guitar is all you can hear. Sometimes, the quality changes drastically throughout the song. From what I can tell, FEEDBAG play a reasonable facsimile of metal-influenced crossover that is teeming with movie samples and dude "humor" that dares you to take it seriously. (GH) (17-song cassette, lyrics not included, feedbaghatesyou.bandcamp.com)

THE FLOOR ABOVE – *Assault on Still Life* – Nashville, Tennessee's long-running, manic, one-person hardcore onslaught is at it again with 21 songs of fucked up, dissonant energy. Slightly out of tune, a wall of crazy noise, distant pained howls, and fucked up pounding drums gives this an off-kilter feel that is in line with hardcore but definitely on its own path. This is refreshing when USHC feels like it is following a script that was written in 1981. Recommended. (GH) (21-song cassette, lyrics included, notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com)

FUCKSAKE – *The Fuck Tape* – Three shirtless dudes playing bouncy, energetic punk with single-string guitar hooks that sounds like '90s basement pop punk, but has somehow been recategorized as pogo or hardcore in 2019. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, suicidebongtapes.bandcamp.com)

GAZ – *Demo* – Philly's GAZ destroys. The blurry-handed guitar style (and delivery by every member really) recalls the wildness of old Finnish or Brazilian hardcore. Golnar's uncompromising vocal delivery addresses alienation, violent society, disruption of the norm, and the dehumanizing Israeli occupation of Palestine. Fucking abrasive, but with memorable vocal hooks that echo in my head. Half of IN SCHOOL for those concerned, and you should be, because this shit smokes. (MA) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, gazgazgaz.bandcamp.com)

DON GARNELLI – *War Of Currents* – So the To Live A Live Records dude has a noise thing (this is not new) and holy shit it is good. Discordant creations and mindfukk noise and a whole lot of "what the fukk is this" and you almost wonder why you still listen to punk. Almost. (WN) (13–track cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

GLOWING BRAIN – Layered, gazey tracks create reverberating indie rock and a fast tempo that reminds me of HOT SNAKES or GIRLSCHOOL with the heaviness of BIG BUSINESS and the vocal angst of JERRY'S KIDS. GLOWING BRAIN has an interesting aesthetic: stoner rock, psychedelic hardcore, freight train rock'n'roll...I find it difficult to categorize, but most importantly they have grabbed my attention with walls of noise coming from all directions, multiple

vocal pitches happening simultaneously, and expansive instrumental breakdowns. *"Cold beer, old gear."* Cool. They're from Oakland. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, glowingbrain.bandcamp.com)

GUN JR. – *The Shakes* – San Francisco late '80s garage mentality, a little bit of psych mixed in with a drug-fueled garage rock'n'roll attack creating wild ass swinging tunes, but mostly focusing on the slower soulful shits that sometimes land dangerously close to boring (be careful dudes, seriously…you've got a pretty good thing going, don't go and fukk it up). Title track is the choice cut, maybe because its teeth are a little sharper than the rest? I don't know that I need GUN JR. all the time, but I'm very glad that I had them for an afternoon. (WN) (10-song CD-R, lyrics included, gunjr.bandcamp.com)

HAN GAN – *The City of Magnificent Intentions* – My first thought was "DC" and then the intro was over and the first real song kicked in and there was this weird but awesome piano track and my second thought was "yeah…definitely DC" and then I used the google machine and…yeah, DC. I'm going to be honest and say that I wish HAN GAN would occasionally stop meandering and go fast and/or hard, but damn these tracks are really good, especially for fans of late '80s Dischord. Shit is all here. Choice track: "Soul's Fire Escape." (WN) (9-song CD-R, lyrics included, hangandc.bandcamp.com)

HITTER – Fist banging rock 'n roll, really dark and *really* dirty. This one grabs you right out of the gate. Similarities to LOST GOAT and KARP are noteworthy, and those are seriously heavy hitters (pun intended), but I feel like these kids are really going for BITCH or HALLOWS EVE. Soaring and insistent femme lead vocals, a bulldozer production, and a shameless affinity for getting down hard. Badass. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, hitterchicago@gmail.com, hitter.bandcamp.com)

HOARDER – Let's talk about HOARDER. Let's talk about some freaks from Olympia making furious and furiously filthy and *important* punk. Let's talk about vocals more fierce and commanding than any I have heard in a long time…and let's talk about how they are even better here than they were on their last demo. This shit is real, y'all, and I recommend HOARDER for any readers who like hardcore or think they know what good hardcore sounds like. Because it sounds like HOARDER. (WN) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, hoarderoly.bandcamp.com)

HUMAN ADULT BAND – *T. Penn Collections* – You know that thing where bands put their whole demo backwards on the flip side of the tape? Well, these pricks did it on the front side, and that should kinda give you some idea of what you're in for with HUMAN ADULT BAND. *And* they start the whole thing with a fifteen minute drone/noise piece. Fukkn jerks. And after all that, what do we get? Coffee shop (on acid) jam band weirdness. Seriously, fukk you guys. I know there's a grand plan, but honestly fukk you. (WN) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, 14-song cassette, non lyrics, sagahouse.bandcamp.com)

INSOLENT WRETCH – *Insane Civilized Demo* – Sometimes you can tell exactly what it's gonna sound like just by looking at the cover. Gas mask guy holding a gun = crusty D-beat. INSOLENT WRETCH are every bit as capable as any other, but aren't bringing anything new to the table. (MA) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, warfearuk88@hotmail.com)

JNX – *Out For Blood* – The aesthetic is all here: dark, mysterious, and sonically discombobulating freak show punk. At the same time, it somehow doesn't really work. Like, they're trying, and I *get* it, but it sounds fake…even though I feel like JNX are very very real. Maybe there are too many things going on at once (the heavy riff in "H.A.L.F."—is it TORCHE or STRIFE? This is important…), but they never seem to gel or even figure out their approach. There's a really sick band trapped inside these schemes, we just haven't heard it yet. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, jnxseattle.bandcamp.com)

LEAGUE OF PITY – Melodic dad punk that your dad wished he had made when he was a teenager. Moderately quirky melodic shit along the lines of the DICKIES, but slower. (WN) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, leagueofpity.bandcamp.com)

GARY LLAMA – *New Folk* – "All The Punk Rockers" sounds like a lost Peter Murphy cut, and the rest of *New Folk* meanders around various associated late '80s new wave/college rock influences (I hear DRAMARAMA, SOCIAL DISTORTION, even BECK) and it's all presented with a darkness that is wholly compelling. Ironically, I could happily do with a collection of just the less "rock" stuff because that's where Gary Llama seems to really shine. Give me "Because Sometimes We Forget About Beauty" any day, just don't tell the punx. (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics included, garyllama.bandcamp.com)

LEXICON – *5 Tracks Demo* – Scathing and snarling hardcore rage that pogos in hell. The vocals are awash with venomous spit and sound maniacally vicious. The bass is buoyant and bouncy. The guitar dices things up on the low end, and the drums tumultuously grumble through. Lyrics are misanthropic antisocial outbursts. This is ugly noise punk from Seattle and a great first outing. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, lexic0n.bandcamp.com)

THE MOLDS – *Saltine* – Airy and angular twee punk (though I should be clear that the emphasis here is punk…the catchy swooning shit comes off as an accidental byproduct of genius). Compositional trappings of another place and time, reborn as meditations on isolation. THE MOLDS are at once instantly familiar and wholly unique: synths when you don't expect them, SPIRITUALIZED moments, TSUNAMI moments, and all kinds of things in between. Yet another comparison to the sounds of guitar-driven late '80s college radio, as everything new is old (again), but that comparison is only to put them in a place…once there, this outfit make their own way. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, volarrecords.bandcamp.com)

MYSTIC PRIESTESS – Shameless modern anarcho/punk/goth, head and shoulders above all of the regurgitated homages that populate the present day void. Aggression through intensity without ever baring teeth, Oakland's MYSTIC PRIESTESS are brooding and inward while always remaining fiercely in your face. This recording captures them better than I ever imagined that a studio could. Searing guitars and "Love In A Void"-era Siouxsie howls. Anyone even casually interested in the various rebirths and manifestations of dark and/or goth punk need to start their searches here. Fukkn superb. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, transylvaniantapes.bandcamp.com)

NERVE ACCID – Damn, imagine the reality of being a jammy, sort of psychedelic, tepid, alternative indie rock band writing six minute songs in New York in 2019 and boasting that Dino from the MURDER JUNKIES is your drummer. That shit is bleak. I'm so glad that I don't have to talk about these weak ass, shit bands in print anymore. Fucking Christ. (GH) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, nerveaccid.com)

NEVER DIE! – *Promo 2018* – Furious Japanese-influenced hardcore on speed. Screaming guitar leads and a relentless pace that seems to increase over the course of this short demo. Some nuance is traded for power here, but it's an equitable exchange, and NEVER DIE! deliver the goods in the clenched fist thrash/hardcore department. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, neverdieburningspirits@gmail.com)

OPTION – *The Hour of Action* – Boston peace punk for 2019. Dan was in SURRENDER, BRAIN KILLER, and NO SIR I WON'T, so you get the idea. He shares the vocals with Sam from MUNDO MUERTO. Political songs by and about aging punks trying their best to figure out and how to help this shit show called the modern world. I'd love to see them play in the streets before we burn the whole system to the ground. OPTION will be there with us putting society together based on mutual aid, so please enjoy these songs and get ready. (AT) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, anotheroption.bandcamp.com)

OVERBITE – *Burning Forever* – Distorted and fukkd noise with stomps that appeal to all stompers (regardless of subgenre). This is bleak and noisy hardcore that falls somewhere between S.H.I.T. and BONE AWL with a ferocity that simply transcends classification. The internet says they are from Ireland and have been active for several years…this is really good. Like, terrifyingly good. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, overbitehc.bandcamp.com)

THE PROF. FUZZ 63 – *Kirwin Streetman's Sugar Bride Blues* – People just send in their garbage music that has no real relation to punk with promo sheets that say shit like "Imagine Leonard Cohen fronting the CRAMPS." No, motherfucker! Fucking Lux Interior fronted the CRAMPS and I'm not going to imagine any other reality because it pales in comparison and is a slap in the face to the legacy of a true genius. Anyway, this doesn't sound like any of that. It sounds like a lukewarm WOGGLES making stale sex jokes with a Farfisa. There is zero emotion in the vocals. Have you really *felt life??* (GH) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, dreamyliferecords.com)

PYROX / SEE//GET – A nightmarish 80 minutes of harsh noise from both artists. (MA) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, info@pantarheirecordings.com, segieth.jonathan@gmail.com)

RODENT – *Rats in a Cage* – Weird that it's plural rats (with an s, like more than one) in that cage, because RODENT is a single dude and a few plug-ins on his computer cranking out ugly and dark crossover thrash. The track "Fear Of Death" is a pure screamer, but the whole damn tape rips pretty damn hard. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, makirat10@hotmail.com, rodent–hc.bandcamp.com)

SCOLDING – Brutal hardcore with nods to '90s metalcore in the vein of ACME and AKEPHAL but with feet firmly planted in modern ferocity. Searing lead vocals and a harsh fullness to their recording that captures all of the power and what I imagine is the intensity of their live shows. This one is really really good, kids. Don't snooze. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, scolding.bandcamp.com)

SEVERANCE PACKAGE – *Pariah Days* – Solid-ass '90s East Bay born from '10s Chico, California (or vice versa?). Adulthood has infected these spitfire punks, which means one-half of Oakland's BLACK FORK are now making some legit killer grown up punk. Mid-paced, catchy, snotty sounds to groove to. (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, shutuprecords.com)

THE SHRIKE – Amazingly simple future punk, like the anarcho and/or contrived post-punk shit that the kids are all trying to recreate, but the SHRIKE reinvent it instead of simply re-creating something that already existed. I'm sold. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, theshriketheshrike.bandcamp.com)

SKATE VIDEO – An energetic pop punk band, lots of tempo changes and parts, but with pretty gentle switch-backs. There's no cliff to fall over, maybe rolling hills. The sing-yelling like a summertime anthem sets "Skate Video" up as the hit of the tape. (EY) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, skatevideo.bandcamp.com)

ANDY SMITH – *Glass House* – I've been writing for this rag since 2002 and there's always been some guy sending in his half-baked, kinda punk shit that sounds barely held together and barely inspired. Partially acoustic…some kind of emotional singing…beat poetry style lyrics…woof. (GH) (9-song CD-R, lyrics not included, facebook.com/mrdrboymusic)

STANFIELD – Sludgy, doom-style metal with vocals that are a little more melodic and soaring than the genre usually allows, detailing the all-encompassing nightmare of trying to live in any city as a human without an exorbitant income. Big, heavy riffs dominate this beast in a way that lays somewhere between BLACK SABBATH and FUDGETUNNEL. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, stanfield.bandcamp.com)

STATE DRUGS – *Gut Knots* – See below review for context, because it's the same band and more of the same excellence. *Gut Knots* is waaaaay more pro sounding and (therefore slightly) less compelling, and also why release multiple three song CD-Rs in the same year? But fukk man…good ass punk songs to swoon to are still something worth paying attention to. (WN) (3-song CD-R, lyrics included, statedrugs@gmail.com)

STATE DRUGS – *Sandwina* – I'm not gonna lie: sometimes I forget this shit exists. I don't need STATE DRUGS in large doses, but sometimes a blast of WEAKERTHANS- or JAWBREAKER-influenced sounds delivered with high energy suits me just right. Guitars rule the roost here, dancing between noodly almost-too-metallic and large Midwest punk open chords (if you know what I mean then you know what I mean…if not, then listen to more ARTICLES OF FAITH), and "Woodring Nights" is simply a near perfect track regardless of subgenre. Full endorsement. (WN) (3-song CD-R, lyrics included, statedrugs@gmail.com)

MARCO SYSMA – *Rock'n'Roll Will Never Die* – Well I admit I selected this because the cover is one of those ribbed 3D hologram thingies with a big tiger. Sometimes people send us stuff because we are perceived to be rock'n'roll to the maximum, and I think this is one of those cases. The somewhat awkward and wild vibrato vocal style is at the forefront, almost sounds like parody, but is actually charming to an extent. Reviewable because it doesn't seem like it would fit well anywhere else. (MA) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, marcosysma@gmail.com)

TIRED OF EVERYTHING – *Silenced* – Straight-up hardcore done right from Raleigh, NC. Quick and to-the-point-demo running through topics like mental health, sexual assault and displacement over a mass of noisy, nasty hardcore. I like that the vocals are pissed, but not as over-the-top growly and reverb-laden as hardcore seems to be lately. Excellent shit. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, tiredofeverything.bandcamp.com)

TOM BOIL – *Everything Is Fine and That's the Problem* – Okay, this TOM BOIL tape has five tracks on it: "Diplodocus," "Hadrosaurus," "Pterodactyl," "Stegosaurus," and "Triceratops." That's exactly why I grabbed it. And I love it. Imagine ZERO HOUR meets SONIC YOUTH, UNWOUND, and FOUR HUNDRED YEARS played underwater with a tornado occurring on the surface. Warbled, muffled, poignant screaming, sonically dreamy. TOM BOIL are from Tulsa, call out rape culture in the local area (see liner notes), and fucking rock. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, tomboiltulsa.bandcamp.com)

THE UNCOMMITTED – Whoa. I'm kinda speechless. Cerebral mutant hardcore. This one is really really hard to get a handle on, partially because it's so damned good. Everything is under a minute except the opus "See? Aye, Eh? Man…" and it's just blast after blast of deconstructed hardcore

with a lap steel guitar. Fast and smart as fukk, lyrics that constantly give me pause and command my attention. Musically it's a furious document, but I feel like it's way more than just that. Also it's apparently a solo project from one of the dudes from SONS OF ISHMAEL. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, nevermetastranger.org, c/o Never Met A Stranger, 2–680 Shaw Street, Toronto, ON, CANADA M6G 3L7)

VIEJA ESTRIPE – *Planeta en Crisis* – Straightforward hardcore from Puerto Rico with a sound that lands somewhere between ripping skate thrash, Oi!, and the DEAD KENNEDYS. They have that pogo bounce even when they are playing full out. Killer backing vocals and catchy at all times, VIEJA ESTRIPE never let up. (WN) (14-song CD-R, lyrics not included, Machete Records, 1303 Almendro, Los Colobos Park, Carolina, Puerto Rico 00987)

WARBASTARD – *Blood on Your Hands* – Okay this just screams DOOM to me, and guess what?! No, it's actually much more metallic than that. The drums trip things up in a unique fashion. The vocals are sung in a similar rhythm on each track, riffs are typical as well. WARBASTARD of Dis-consin bring a solid mix of '90s NYHC, '80s thrash metal, and '90s American political/anarcho punk. Disturbingly negative, a helpless sound that is clear, harsh, and exhaustingly pissed off. (JR) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included. warbastard1.bandcamp.com)

WICKED TENSION – *Death of a Nation* – Previously just TENSION (EP from '85), these aged Buffalo punks have decided their message is still relevant. Perhaps it is, and the mid-tempo punk songs are decent, while the faster ones are a limper SNFU at best. Mostly unremarkable but well-intentioned and with at least a couple solid tracks. (MA) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, wickedtension.com)

WOMBO – *Staring at Trees* – WOMBO is all over the place, somehow giving off vibes of the SLITS, MINUTEMEN, and FRED FRITH at the same time. They go into these guitar fuckery realms that sound reminiscent of DEERHOOF and MELT BANANA with near-operatic singing masterfully commanding the lead vocals. I can't even really tell you what this is, but I know that I like it. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, womborocks.bandcamp.com)

WORLD TENSION – Crossover thrash from Las Vegas that spends a lot of time on the divebomb and mid-tempo end of the spectrum. Still, they turn it up to circle pit levels when it's needed and probably flirt with a windmill kick or two, but never quite get into "Oh shit it's going the fuck off" fastcore levels, if you know what I mean. The lyrics mirror the fucking ugly ass world of ignorant racism and shitheadedness that we can't seem to escape, even though it's *motherfucking 2019!!* Take down the fascists in your scene and pit. WORLD TENSION has got your back. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, worldtension.bandcamp.com)

THE WOUND – *Strange Feeling* – I'm gonna assume that this is the same THE WOUND I reviewed a few months ago because both bands are called THE WOUND and both bands are sick as fukk so both bands are probably the same band. Burly, forceful hardcore…like SSD reincarnated and ever so slightly more metallic. The fasts are all encompassing, the vocals are really really nasty good, and the band's goal seems to be destroying songs instead of presenting them. I endorse this goal. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, thewoundwy.bandcamp.com)

ŻONA ZŁA – *Sesja 2* – I don't even know what I'm hearing, but this is perhaps the most crucial thing in the pages of this final scheduled print issue. Disorienting Polish language hardcore, with some indescribable things happening to the guitars that dominate the mix and the impact. Fukkn fire, absolutely mandatory, and a DEFIANCE cover that crushes the original. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, zonazlapunkdublin.bandcamp.com)

ZYMOTIC – *8 Tracks* – Bombastic, full-throttle crasher crust. Period. Zero bullshit and fearsome fury. Montreal's ZYMOTIC pull no punches and absolutely deliver the goods. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, desolaterecords.storenvy.com)

V/A – *Maximum Belgium Vol. 1* – Region specific tape comps rule over all, punks. This is truth. Handwritten note says it all: "A Side new bands // B Side not so new bands." And there you go, fourteen Belgian hardcore bands…and not a stinker in the mix. PERMANENT DEBT, REPROACH, VVOVNDS, HETZE, AGATHOCLES, and way more. I repeat: region specific tape comps rule over all. (WN) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, wangedrag.be)

V/A – *Punx to the Bone #3* – International punk comp featuring 30 bands, none of which I've heard of (except RADICAL FUN TIME, who I discovered during last month's reviews). All styles and qualities represented. If you're looking for a shuffle-style introduction to a shitload of different sounding bands, this should suffice. (MA) (30-song CD-R, lyrics not included, dilapidatedmusic@gmail.com)

Please, may I have some more?

Yes, punk! There will be more...

REVIEWS
RADIO
INTERVIEWS
COLUMNS
INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE
TOP TENS
RADIO
INTERVIEWS
COLUMNS
INTERNATIONAL
COVERAGE

maximumrocknroll.com

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to zines@maximumrocknroll.com for information.

(AM) Allan McNaughton
(GM) Gina Murrell
(JD) Joan DeToro

THE ADVENTURES OF PUNK BIRD #1–3
$2 / 16 pgs each
Gainesville, Florida is a dirtier punk town than most. Featuring swampy humidity and temperatures of up to (and frequently over) 100 degrees, many punks there, just like elsewhere, seek relief from the shit weather through drinking. And this Punk Bird character is no exception. In these three brief comic zines, you see Punk Bird struggle to make friends, get absolutely fucking plastered, party too hard, and, in a slightly more serious comic, seek housing after their house is evicted to make room for condos. The drawings are crude but not too crude, and there is a humorous quality to the Punk Bird's adventures. A fun, light-hearted read for when you're on the shitter. (JD)
etsy.com/shop/punkbird352

THE AUSTERITY TIMES #5
$1 / 8 pgs
Produced by Thomas Vincent and Stu Chaney to promote their band Austerity, the zine *Austerity Times* is a brief stream-of-consciousness about whatever the Brighton-based lads happened to be feeling that day, committed to paper and photocopied in black and white. In a style reminiscent of William S. Burroughs' cut-up technique, *The Austerity Times* #5 is composed of a series of phrases, sentences, and sentiments seemingly clipped from the bandmates' typed and printed screeds, and then pasted randomly against a backdrop of abstract illustrations. The result is a freeform diatribe against capitalism, conformity, and more, surely reflecting Austerity the band's ethos—which, to summarize, is: "subculture is fucking dead! Long live subculture!" (GM)
subcomandantecrouton@gmail.com

BEHIND THE ZINES #7
$3 / 40 pgs
This is "a zine about zines." Contributors including Billy McCall, Jess Hogan, Jake Williams, Kelly Shortandqueer, and Giz Medium reflect on zine making and distribution, zine fests and zine libraries, perzines, and the changing zine scene. Speaking of zine scenes, Ed Tillman covers the "West Coast Zine Scene, 2018," largely focusing on Los Angeles; and Ed Chops looks at the "East Coast Zine Scene, 2018," hitting upon Pete's Mini Zine Fest (New York), Philly Zine Fest (Pennsylvania), DIY Fest (Maryland), and more. In *Behind the Zines* #7, there are also charts and graphs for tracking zines; economics of a zine fest; and what, how, and why of zine production. Plus, there are zine reviews. This comp zine is a must-read for anyone who loves zines. (GM)
iknowbilly@gmail.com

CHEAP TOYS #22
$2 / 64 pgs
Giz Medium is an anarchist librarian and punk musician living in Marseille, and he makes *Cheap Toys*, a bilingual zine in which he explores his political philosophy, chronicles his travels, covers bands, and profiles an assortment of DIY enterprises. He begins issue #22 of *Cheap Toys* with an introspective piece where he tries "to figure out better what anarchism means to me." Following is an interview with a cofounder of the Detroit Printing Co-op; a write-up on post-hardcore band Canine; and ruminations on student activism in Quebec; Black & Red Books, a publisher of anti-authoritarian literature; and the lily of the valley as a symbol for May Day in France. Much of *Cheap Toys* #22 is in French; non-speakers may still be intrigued by the radical content. (GM)
xtramedium@laposte.net

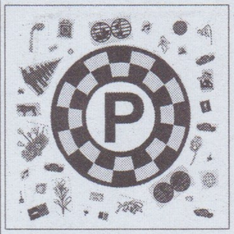
FLÜORAZINE #5
Free / 48 pgs
This is an interesting, thought-provoking zine. A lot of work went into putting together this "maximalist," cut-and-paste style collage of ideas. The pages are crammed with clippings, cuttings from articles, and editor Kit Brixton's writings on a diverse range of topics. There's also a nice little piece on the local radio station, zine reviews, and other assorted mish-mash. Kit publishes his zine from prison, although that is not really the focus of the zine. When you get in touch, use plain white paper and envelopes to improve the chances of him seeing it. (AM)
Kristopher Storey, 26731-01B FMC, PO Box 14500, Lexington, KY 40512

JOHN CAGE – BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN COMPOSER
24 pgs
This zine is pretty much exactly what it says in the title: page after page of biographical snippets about composer John Cage. Entries vary from the sort of simple facts you might find on a Wikipedia page, to the downright odd, like this one: "One day he spent $.25 on a comb, $1.17 on fish, $5.10 on beer and $6 on Lucky cigarettes." Or this: "He dreamed of discovering a ship filled with hundred-year-old marionette-like wooden dolls." No sources are cited for the 150-plus entries, so I can't vouch for their veracity, but at the same time, I have no reason to disbelieve them. If you are a fan of Cage, this is a worthwhile curiosity. (AM)
raincloudzine@gmail.com

RAZORCAKE #108
$3 / 116 pgs
This will be the last review of *Razorcake* in a printed issue of *MRR!* This issue, Australian sharpies Amyl and the Sniffers are the cover stars, alongside long, in-depth interviews with No Love, and Steve Ignorant of Crass. There's an introduction to free jazz, as well as all the usual columns, comics and reviews. Support print punk zines while you can! You never know how long they'll be around... (AM)
PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042, razorcake.org

Feel It Records

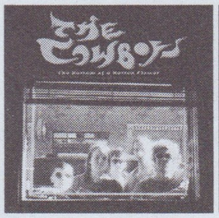
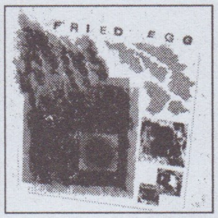
new for 2019 new for 2019 new for 2019 new for



Protruders
"Poison Future" 12"

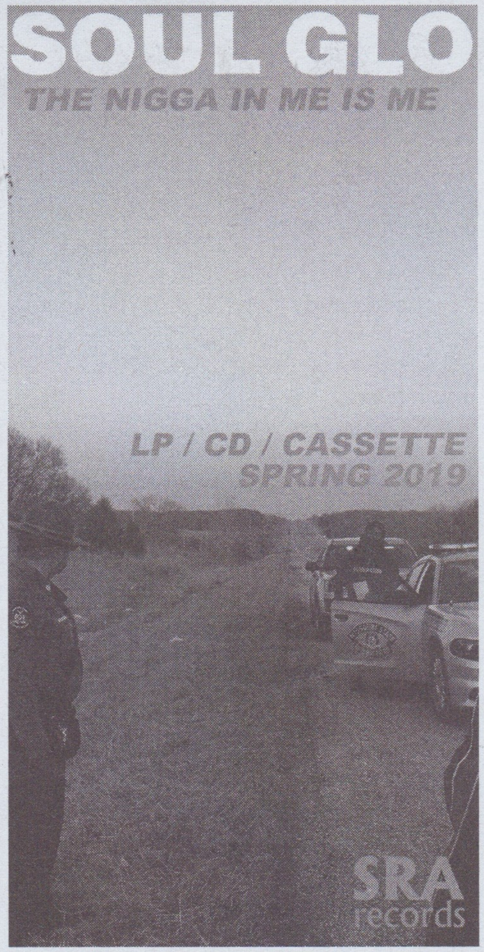
After four self-released cassettes, Montréal's premier art-punk/neo-proto-punk band Protruders makes its vinyl debut! The heart of the band is still beating for the sort of raw open-minded non-generic punk that once came from the likes of Rocket From The Tombs, Swell Maps, Dead Moon, Dancing Cigarettes, etc.

just repressed - hot new LPs from The Cowboys & Fried Egg!

new for 2019 new for 2019 new for 2019 new for

available direct from
www.feelitrecordshop.com
distributed by Revolver, Ebullition, and Sonic Rendezvous
UP NEXT: CEMENT SHOES - Too LP
PLEASURE LEFTISTS - new LP



Growing up in rural Minnesota in the late 1980s in a world before the Internet and social media does not seem possible without Maximum Rocknroll!

Thank you so much for helping outcast teenagers like me discover bands, make pen pals, and learn about different scenes from all over the world!

I am grateful for your staff taking the time to review many of the records I have been involved with.

You have
made the world a better place!

Long live MRR!

Christian
mpls ltd
www.mplsltd.com

Maximum Rock and roll's importance to my life was it instantly provided a broad connection to underground DIY Subculture of music, ideas and politics and between it's fans at a time when mainstream media and culture was largely disinterested and / or indifferent. Eliminating difficult guesswork and struggle of finding out what was going on worldwide as the '80's hardcore scene exploded. It did this without the goal of profiteering or selling you anything.

Through tireless work MRR became a huge current of the direction, documentation and focus of the developing worldwide punk scene. You could participate, send in letters, scene reports or your own music and art, contact other fans and bands, mail-order music and 'zines not sold within thousands of miles of where you lived. This was the magazine's strongest legacy and gift, as a point of connection and incubator for a scene that, at least at that point, was solely sustained by its participants and fans.

Settled into 40+ years of history Punk Rock might need to still fight for relevancy but doesn't need to argue for its legitimacy. It's easy to make similar connections and get information through commercial websites run by billionaires.... that want to show you ads for soap and widgets, and track your browsing history and movement to better sell ads for soap and widgets to make themselves even wealthier billionaires. Incredible convenience overrides concerns of intent or provenance.

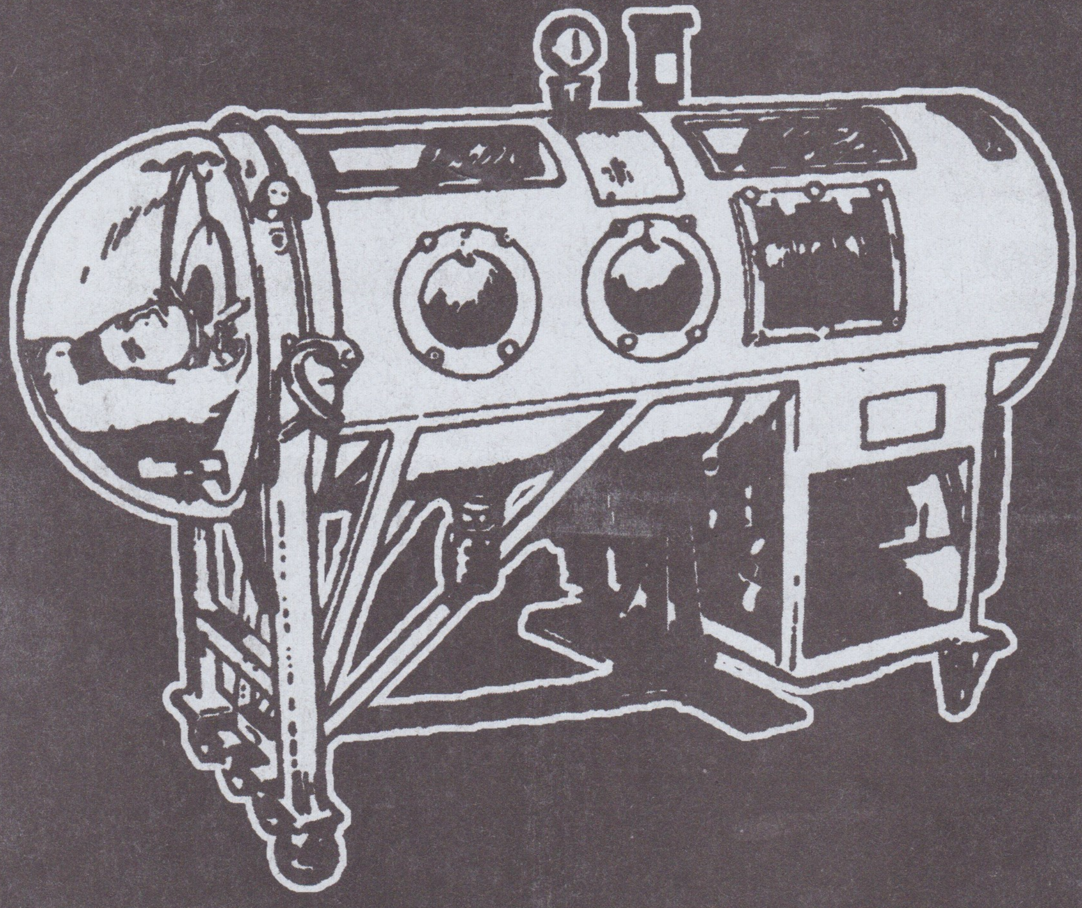
It always seemed that the original MRR's crews was fervently anti- major label because they had seen the vibrant SF punk scene of the 1970's squashed and denied it's birthright by corporate major labels and promoters who didn't understand, want to understand and even stop this new music. There's little dialogue about corporations role in distribution and dissemination of punk and hardcore now, as with zero online publishing costs, the aspect largely seems a benevolent free ride, but a buried in the fine print one that can be revoked at any moment, where content ownership can be ceded up with uploading or reused for commercial purposes without authorization.

It is my hope by transitioning online that MRR is able to sustain, if not even broaden, it's role as touchstone of connection between international punk communities, bands and fans. The value of a strong, independent voice free of commercial constraints and interest is vital to a DIY scene that often starts with music very few people actually care about but.... are championed until everyone else figures it out ....and where else am I going to find out what new hardcore is raging in Indonesia and Poland?
To MRR shitworkers past and present thank you, and to those of the future....ONWARD!

PRANK

www.prankrecords.com / PO BOX 410892 SF CA 94141 USA / prankrecords.bigcartel.com

Now cracks a noble spine.
Good night sweet prints:



And wings of patients sing thee to thy rest!
Love, IRON LUNG